Supreme Court won't stay execution of 30 convicts

Story on PAGE A2

Palestinian girl gets kidney from blast victim

JERUSALEM—A suicide bombing that killed six Jews provided a new life for a Palestinian girl, who received a kidney from a young Scottish student killed in the blast.

Yasmin Abu Ramila, 7, a Palestinian from East Jerusalem, had been on a transplant waiting list and undergoing dialysis treatment for almost two years, an Israeli Health Ministry official said Sunday. She received the kidney of 19-year-old Jonathan Jesner,

PALESTINIAN /A15

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Censors chief eludes NBI arrest, posts bail

By Philip C. Tubeza and Marinel Cruz

THIS is one episode that chief censor Marilen Dinglasan cannot ban with a triple-X rating.

National Bureau of Investigation agents yesterday fanned out to serve an arrest warrant on Dinglasan, presidential friend and chair of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, for a case of

CENSORS/ A16

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Tuesday, September 24, 2002 ★ 40 pages / 3 sections / vol. 17 / no. 288 P15
website: www.inq7.net

US readies 100,000 troops for Iraq war

Invasion to zoom in on Saddam, says paper

WASHINGTON—The United States is reportedly planning to mobilize 100,000 troops for an air and ground invasion of Iraq. US military planners have begun choosing targets, the size of troop deployments and a likely timeline for a US war on Iraq, The Washington Post reported Monday.

The United States was fine-tuning targets and zooming in on Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein and his inner circle even as Baghdad urged the United Nations to spurn US attempts to use it to make war.

The US invasion force, likely to number about a fifth of the 500,000 deployed in the 1991 Gulf War, would rely on special operations forces and a simultaneous ground and air assault, the Post said.

"Our interest is to get there very quickly, decapitate the regime and open the place up, demonstrating that we're there to liberate, not to occupy," a military planner was quoted as saying.

The Post said the war would likely target Tikrit, Saddam's hometown, which is seen as the political heart of the country.

More than 55,000 US troops already are deployed throughout the Gulf and in Afghanistan, with most of them oriented toward Iraq.

As Bush weighed his military options, Iraq's ruling Baath party called on the international community to oppose any new UN

US READIES/ A15

MARKET PLAY
President Macapagal greets young fans at Divisoria's wet market in Manila after visiting the North Harbor, but her security aides find the surprise encounter too close for comfort.
EDWIN BACASMAS

GMA approval rating plunges in SWS poll

IN JUST a month, President Macapagal-Arroyo's net satisfaction rating plunged 10 points amid the resignation of a popular Cabinet member, renewed hostage-taking in Sulu and expulsion of illegal Filipino migrants from Malaysia, according to Social Weather Stations.

The President's net satisfaction rating fell to 18 percent in a survey conducted on Aug. 24-Sept. 8 from her all-time high of 28 percent that was among the findings of a commissioned "special post-Sona survey" conducted on Aug. 6-9, SWS said yesterday.

The "special post-Sona" survey was commissioned by the Crusade for Better Philippines Movement, a group headed by Michael Go Say, purportedly a friend of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo. The special survey was conducted after the President delivered on July 22 her State of the Nation Address, wherein she pledged to build a "strong republic."

The latest SWS poll showed 48 percent of Filipinos were satisfied with Ms Macapagal's performance and 30 percent were dissatisfied. The net result is the difference between positive and negative views.

A month earlier, the President's

GMA/ A16

DOJ chief defies gag order on China row

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

MALACAÑANG has ordered Justice Secretary Hernando Perez to stop talking publicly about his quarrel with Chinese Ambassador Wang Chung Gui on the matter of the 122 Chinese fishermen held in Palawan for poaching.

But Perez appears unfazed by the verbal order issued by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo. He yesterday told reporters that the letter he wrote the Department of Foreign Affairs asking that Wang be declared persona non grata had been forwarded to the DFA along with affidavits of members of his staff who witnessed the quarrel last Friday.

DOJ CHIEF/ A15

70 solons oppose MJ extradition

By Juliet L. Javellana

TWO strongly worded House resolutions, bearing the signatures of 70 congressmen, yesterday warned of a constitutional crisis should the judiciary allow the extradition of Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez to the United States.

The resolutions, reportedly in circulation for signatures for one year already, were filed on the expectation that the Supreme Court would issue a ruling denying bail for Jimenez. Such a ruling will effectively put him behind bars while the US extradition case against him is pending in court.

In Resolutions No. 762 and 763, Representatives Rolex Suplico (Iloilo), Prospero Pichay (Suri-

70 SOLONS /A15

PEA officials host media road tour

By Juliet L. Javellana and Christian V. Esguerra

VERY expensive but not overpriced.

The top three officials of the Public Estates Authority (PEA) put up this defense yesterday as they took journalists on a tour of the allegedly overpriced P1.1-billion President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard (previously called an avenue), the 5.1-km asphalt road that runs parallel to Roxas Boulevard.

The agency undertook the road project at the Manila Bay reclamation area.

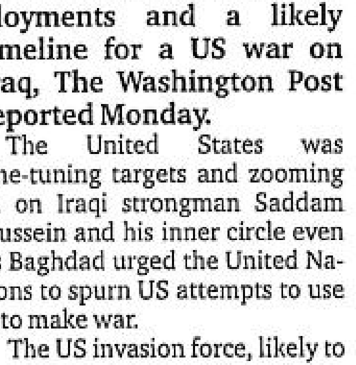
PEA Chair Ernest Villareal, General Manager Benjamin Cariño and Deputy General Manager Manuel Beriña Jr. said the contract awarded to Jesusito D. Legaspi Construction was "legal, aboveboard and the prices are reasonable."

They said PEA Director Sulficio Tagud Jr., who said the Legaspi contract was overpriced by P600 million, was "confused" about the project.

Villareal said he received information that Pastor "Boy" Saycon, secretary general of the Council on Philippine Af-

PEA OFFICIALS/ A6

EXPENSIVE? Yes; overpriced? No, (from left) PEA General Manager Benjamin Cariño, Deputy General Manager Manuel Berina and Chair Ernest Villareal say of the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard project.
ERIK ARAZAS



O... PAANO KO MAWI-WITHDRAW YON, E... NARITO AKO?

Velarde bank balance: Only P2,770

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

DID somebody drain the controversial Jose Velarde bank account?

From P3.2 billion as estimated by prosecutors in the trial of Joseph Estrada on plunder charges, the Velarde account, which is allegedly owned by the de-

VELARDE/ A16

'Destabilization' plot behind road scam dismissed

By Cynthia D. Balana, Carlito Pablo and TJ Burgonio

KEEP the soldiers out of the road fiasco.

Thus said Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, vice chair of the Senate defense committee, in response to a report dragging soldiers into the controversy surrounding the President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue (PDMA), a 5.2-km asphalt road at the Manila Bay reclamation area that cost the government P1.1 billion, a supposed overprice of P600 million.

Biazon said that linking the military to the fiasco was a disservice not only to the Armed Forces of the Philippines but also to the country.

He said the Malacañang source who tried to link the AFP to an alleged destabilization plot against the government was courting instability.

"Political instability is not what this country needs. It could only contribute further to economic decline and exacerbate the already critical peace and order situation," he said.

Gen. Benjamin Defensor, AFP chief of staff, said the military remained intact amid rumors of a destabilization plot by a group of soldiers called "Kasundalohan," which wrote a letter to President Macapagal-Arroyo to express disgust over delays in the release of soldiers' pay and politicking in the AFP, among other issues.

"The letter is not signed. We do not entertain unsigned letters, but to ensure and prevent anybody from thinking that there is such a thing going on, we came out with a statement disowning it

DESTABILIZATION/ A16

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/09/24/02

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Supreme Court won't stop executions

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SUPREME Court has thrown out the petition of a human-rights lawyers group which had sought to stop the execution of 30 convicts while Congress debates the Death Penalty Law.

The court ruled that the power to stop executions lay with the President and not the judiciary. "The remedy lies not in the Supreme Court, but in the Office of the President," the 15-member court said.

A lawyers' organization, the Free Legal Assistance Group (Flag), asked the high tribunal one month ago to stop the judicial killings, including five that have been scheduled in the next five months.

President Macapagal-Arroyo granted 90-day stays of execution to three condemned rapists on Aug. 28 in deference to the birthday of Jaime Cardinal Sin on Aug. 31.

At the time, the Palace also said the President had postponed the scheduled executions of convicted rapists Rolando Pagdayawon, Eddie Sernadilla and Filomeno Serrano ostensibly to give Ms Macapagal more time to study the death penalty.

The Supreme Court also rejected the Flag lawyers' argument that it should grant a stay of execution because Congress is reviewing the 1994 capital crimes law.

The lawyers had also argued that the death penalty is unconstitutional.

Flag had claimed there was a need to stop the executions so as not to "deprive them (convicts) of the beneficial effects of a congressional repeal of the death penalty law."

But the SC declared that the "mere pendency of a bill in Congress should not per se warrant outright issuance of a temporary restraining order to stay the execution of a death sentence that has become final."

The high court told Flag that "perhaps the remedy lies not in the SC but in the Office of the President to which any plea for reprieve (or pardon) ought to be properly addressed."

With the SC ruling, justice and prison officials are left with no choice but to carry out the executions starting next month.

Three other rapists are scheduled to be put to death—Alfredo Nardo on Oct. 16, Jimmy Jacob on Oct. 31 and Ramil Rayos on Jan. 8. They were not covered by the 90-day reprieve, thus with the SC ruling, Nardo will be the first convict executed, to be followed by Jacob, next month.

The trial courts have yet to schedule the execution of 24 other death row inmates whose convictions had been upheld by the Supreme Court.

In an eight-page resolution written by Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the high court said the specific grounds raised by Flag were "a rehash of arguments already ruled upon by this court in (two cases)."

"Neither does the substantial change in the composition of the court... warrant the reexamination of Republic Acts 7659 (Heinous Crime Law) and 8177 (Lethal Injection Law). The validity or the constitutionality of a law cannot be made to depend on the individual opinions of the members who compose the court. The SC, as an institution, has determined what the law is in the subject cases and therefore the same remains to be so regardless of any change in its composition," the SC said.

The high court pointed out that Flag could not validly invoke the SC rulings in the case of executed rapist Leo Echegaray in seeking stays of execution.

The SC cited its Jan. 4, 1999 resolution which initially deferred Echegaray's execution not on the "primordial basis" of the "possibility that Congress might rethink its position on the death penalty."

It averred that in its subsequent resolution on Jan. 19, 1999, the SC "took extra effort to emphasize the fact that Congress was not in session and this court was on its traditional recess until Jan. 18, 1999." *With AP and AFP reports*

4 Abus, including top Sali aide, slain

By Julie S. Alipala
PDI Mindanao Bureau

ISABELA CITY—Four members of the Abu Sayyaf, including the alleged "right-hand man" of bandit leader Hamsiraji Sali, were killed in an encounter with government troops in Barangay Kumalarang here at dawn yesterday, the military reported.

But Maj. Gen. Glicerio Sua, chief of the 1st Tabak Division and Task Force Comet, said it was not known if Sali had been with the group but had managed to escape.

Sua said soldiers belonging to the Army's 24th Special Forces Company were tracking the Abu Sayyaf in the area when they chanced upon at least 15 of the bandits.

Three of those slain were identified as Komeni Taulani, alias Abu Mang, Sali's alleged aide; Hanapia Macrohon, alias Abu Supian, and Mobin Iba, alias Black Killer.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Ernesto Carolina said the four who were killed were "hard-core terrorists." Soldiers recovered three high-powered firearms from the slain bandits.

Sua said two soldiers were injured in the encounter but he did not identify them.

"I think they (bandits) were looking for food when our troops chanced upon them," Sua said.

The Abu Sayyaf has been linked to al-Qaida, the international terrorist network headed by Osama bin Laden, alleged mastermind of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the United States.

About 1,000 US troops were deployed on Basilan in the first half of the year to train Filipino soldiers to defeat the Abu Sayyaf.

The terrorists continue to hold captive four Filipino women evangelists who were kidnapped on Aug. 30 and three Indonesian seamen who were seized from a Singaporean tugboat while it was passing near Jolo island on June 17.

The military estimates the number of guerrillas operating on Basilan and Jolo islands at more than 200.

"Sali was just lucky this morning," Carolina said. He said the manhunt on Jolo involves approximately 5,000 Marines, Rangers and infantrymen. *With reports from Reuters, AP and AFP*

Young Sabah rape victim set to testify

By Norman Bordadora

"ANGELICA," the 13-year-old Filipino girl who was allegedly raped by a Sabah immigration policeman, will soon have a chance to air her side to Malaysian investigators who will tape her testimony in their country's consulate in Davao City.

Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines Noor Mohammad Taufik said three investigators from his country will interview the young victim in the presence of a Malaysian consular officer and a representative of the Philippines' Department of Social Welfare and Development.

"The interview will be conducted in the consulate because it is nearest (to Zamboanga)," Taufik said.

Angelica, whose real name is being withheld because of her age, is in the custody of the DSWD in Zamboanga.

Philippine officials had expressed concern Malaysian courts might not admit her testimony if this was not taken in a consulate or the Malaysian Embassy in Metro Manila.

The interview would be taped and form the victim's deposition. An affidavit would likewise be executed on the victim's behalf and this would be attested to by a Malaysian consular officer.

The Philippine government has acquired the services of two Malaysian lawyers—Gerald John and Francis Ng Aik Guan—to help prosecute the case against Angelica's attacker.

The Malaysian lawyers have interviewed the victim and other former detainees in Sabah's Kota Kinabalu detention center for illegal aliens.

Meanwhile, of the thousands of Filipinos expelled recently from Malaysia, only about 20 of them have filed complaints of rights violations against authorities of that country, the Commission on Human Rights said. *With Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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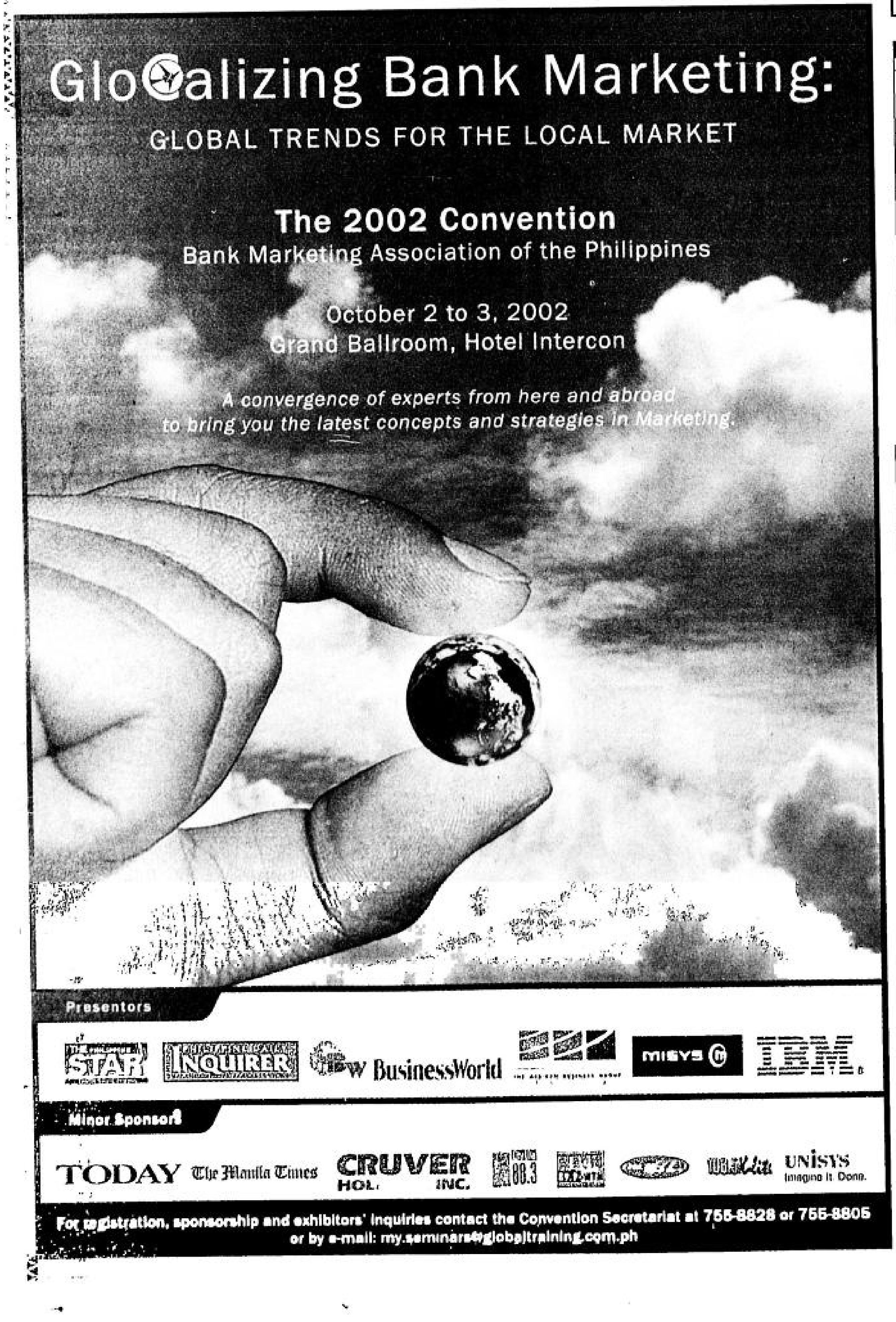

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Farmers tell Abad to speak out

By G. Lacuarta and D. Pazzibugan

MILITANT farmers yesterday urged beleaguered National Food Authority administrator Anthony Abad to speak out and reveal the reasons behind Malacañang's reported moves to kick him out of the agency.

"It is high-time that Abad once and for all clears his name and speak out against Malacañang's despotic habit of kicking out officials," said Rafael Mariano, the chair of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas.

But Abad yesterday did break his silence over his resignation which Malacañang had announced last Friday without explanation.

Interviewed during the NFA anniversary rites yesterday, Abad said he had learned that President Macapagal-Arroyo had accepted his resignation from media reports on Saturday.

Yesterday Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye called Abad to apologize for prematurely announcing his resignation. He repeated Malacañang's belated explanation that Abad was being moved to a new post with "higher responsibilities."

Abad, a former student of the President at the Ateneo, told reporters yesterday that he wanted to thank his mentor for giving him the chance to serve her administration. But he said he now wanted to return to the private sector.

Sources said Abad, who has been publicly scolded by the President at least three times, did resign on Sept. 17, informing the President four days earlier.

The KMP said the reason for the Palace moves against Abad was political.

"The assault against Abad primarily aims to fast-track the NFA's privatization and the implementation of rice trade liberalization," Mariano said.

He said Abad was being eased out of the NFA to make way for Lito Sarmiento, the presidential adviser on agriculture modernization, whose "appointment as NFA board chair is legally untenable."

Mariano warned that uncontrolled rice smuggling coupled with a policy of liberalized rice importation would strengthen the monopoly of the rice cartel once the NFA administrator is replaced.

He said this "would definitely result in the plummeting of farmgate prices" of local palay to as low as P5 per kilo. Average farm gate prices of palay range from P8 to P8.50 per kilo.

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Exposé or Political Gimmickry?

Last September 17, 2002, ex-senator Juan Ponce Enrile released a so-called "exposé" against Meralco and First Gas. These allegations are malicious, misleading and baseless, meant to taint the integrity of the Lopezes.

Allegation 1: ***The contract between the two Lopez-owned companies contained sweetheart provisions that resulted in massive overcharging to consumers.***

The Truth: **We have not overcharged Meralco consumers. These contracts are above-board and went through Energy Regulatory Board's ("ERB") due process and scrutiny, including public hearings.**

- The ERB approved the contract between Meralco and First Gas' Sta. Rita and San Lorenzo on June 11, 1997 and January 24, 2000, respectively.
- Notices were posted in each of the 111 municipalities and cities covered by the Meralco franchise area inviting all concerned parties to attend the public hearings.
- In addition, Meralco formed a special board committee, which included Government nominees, to specifically review these contracts.

Allegation 2: ***There are generous and unwarranted escalation provisions in the capacity fee rates that resulted in automatic increases totaling 18.8% over the ERB-approved rate. This will result in a P31.42 billion windfall over 25 years.***

The Truth: **First Gas does not charge nor collect capacity fees higher than what was originally approved by the ERB.**

- The ERB-approved contract between Meralco and First Gas allows a capacity fee escalation but only up to commercial operations date.
- Since then, there have NOT been, and there will no longer be any escalation on the capacity fee. This is consistent with what is stipulated in our contract with Meralco.
- It is common with international power purchase agreements to include in the capacity fees escalation charges during the construction period (which takes at least two years) that affect final project cost.
- In other power contracts, these additional costs during construction are simply incorporated in a higher capacity fee. While First Gas would have been indifferent using the same pricing mechanism, our contract used a transparent benchmark (United States Consumer Price Index) to assure that such escalation would reflect actual cost. *Walang dagdag, walang bawas!*

Allegation 3: ***The guaranteed heat rate of 6,559 Btu/kWh is overstated. The correct heat rate should be 6,204 Btu/kWh (or typically 55% efficiency). The difference translates to P662 million a year windfall for First Gas.***

The Truth: **The allegation of a windfall is ludicrous! Comparing "apples to apples", our guaranteed heat rate is even better for consumers than that being suggested by the ex-senator.**

- Our guaranteed heat rate of 6,659 Btu/kWh (not 6,559 Btu/kWh) is expressed as a higher heating value figure. The 6,204 Btu/kWh, being suggested by the ex-senator, is OBVIOUSLY expressed as a lower heating value, because a power plant operating at 6,204 Btu/kWh at higher heating value does not yet exist anywhere in the world!
- Our guaranteed heat rate at lower heating value is equivalent to 6,009 Btu/kWh, which is significantly better for consumers than the 6,204 Btu/kWh.
- First Gas is the most efficient power plant in the Philippines today with an efficiency rating of 51.2% (higher heating value) – this is equivalent to 56.7% efficiency rating if measured using lower heating value.

We challenge the ex-senator to search worldwide for a combined cycle power plant with a better guaranteed heat rate when operated in the Philippines!

Allegation 4: ***The higher heat rate of 6,559 Btu/kWh is for single cycle power plants.***

The Truth: **This is absolutely wrong! Anyone conversant with the power industry should know that for a simple-cycle (not single-cycle) power plant, the heat rate is approximately 9,700 Btu/kWh (35% efficiency) on a high heating value basis.**

Allegation 5: ***The minimum take-or-pay on fuel means Meralco consumers are charged for fuel even if not used. If First Gas eventually uses the natural gas, Meralco consumers will be charged again. This results in a windfall of P12.5 billion over 25 years.***

The Truth: **Again, allegations of a windfall from this are preposterous – the Meralco consumers have not and will never be charged for fuel twice under any circumstance!**

- While there is a take-or-pay arrangement on the fuel purchased by First Gas from Shell, and a fuel pass-through arrangement in the contract between First Gas and Meralco, the consumers will never be double-charged for the fuel.
- It is illogical and ludicrous for Meralco to charge their consumers twice – first, when the natural gas is paid for, and a second time, when it is finally consumed – since Meralco only incurs the cost once.

Allegation 6: ***The tolerance of four percent in the metering of the fuel appears to be a built in mechanism to cheat on fuel charges resulting to overcharging of P39.05 billion in undeserved profit for First Gas.***

The Truth: **This is absolutely wrong, misguided and malicious! First Gas has never and will never generate a single centavo of profit on fuel as a result of and within this 4% tolerance.**

- Under the contract between Meralco and First Gas, fuel is a pass-through charge. First Gas bills Meralco on "as incurred" or actual cost basis.
- All fuel-related charges to Meralco are properly documented and supported, including billings from Shell, hence there is no way that First Gas can bill Meralco beyond the Shell billing.
- First Gas' Sta. Rita has operated for more than two years now and it has not generated a single centavo of profit as a result of this metering tolerance.

Allegation 7: ***The Lopezes committed a blunder by locating its second natural gas plant of 500MW in Batangas despite knowing as early as 1996 that the Batangas transmission line would not have enough capacity until 2004.***

The Truth: **The San Lorenzo plant has always been an integral part of the Malampaya Gas-to-Power Project. All transmission development plans of NPC committed that the Batangas Transmission Reinforcement Project, which had funding as early as 1998, would be in place prior to the commercial operations date of San Lorenzo.**

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PCGG's Swiss lawyer quits over brouhaha over brother's job

By Donna S. Cueto

MARTIN Kurer, the controversial Swiss lawyer of the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) who has been accused of "protecting" a bank alleged to have been hiding and laundering Marcos money abroad, has turned in his notice of resignation.

In a closed-door meeting last week, Kurer told the commissioners that he planned to stay on only until March next year.

The meeting had been called after the PCGG learned that the lawyer's older brother, Peter, was chief lawyer for the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS). There was talk that Kurer might be terminated for failing to inform the commission about the "crucial" matter.

Kurer himself told the INQUIRER recently that his brother was appointed group general counsel for the UBS in July last year. This meant that Peter Kurer was on top of all legal matters affecting the bank and its subsidiaries. UBS had allegedly laundered secret Marcos accounts, particularly those in the name of Irene Marcos-Araneta

Kurer has denied there was a conflict of interest with his brother's job because, he said, the PCGG has not filed a case against UBS. Nor did he believe the bank held Marcos deposits.

Besides, he said, he had "casually told" PCGG chair Haydee Yorac about his brother's appointment.

But Yorac said she could not remember such a disclosure.

"Maybe she had many things on her mind," Kurer said.

In any case, he pointed out, Peter got the post five months after Araneta's reported attempt to launder money that she had supposedly kept in UBS.

Kurer admitted that he had told Yorac at the time—as he told past PCGG chair Magdangal Elma earlier—that it would be a waste of government time, money and effort to pursue a case against UBS because the Marcoses had no accounts there.

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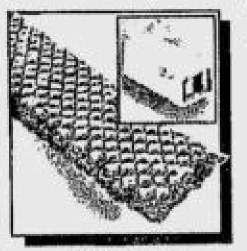

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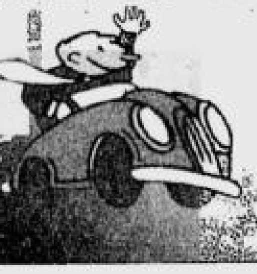

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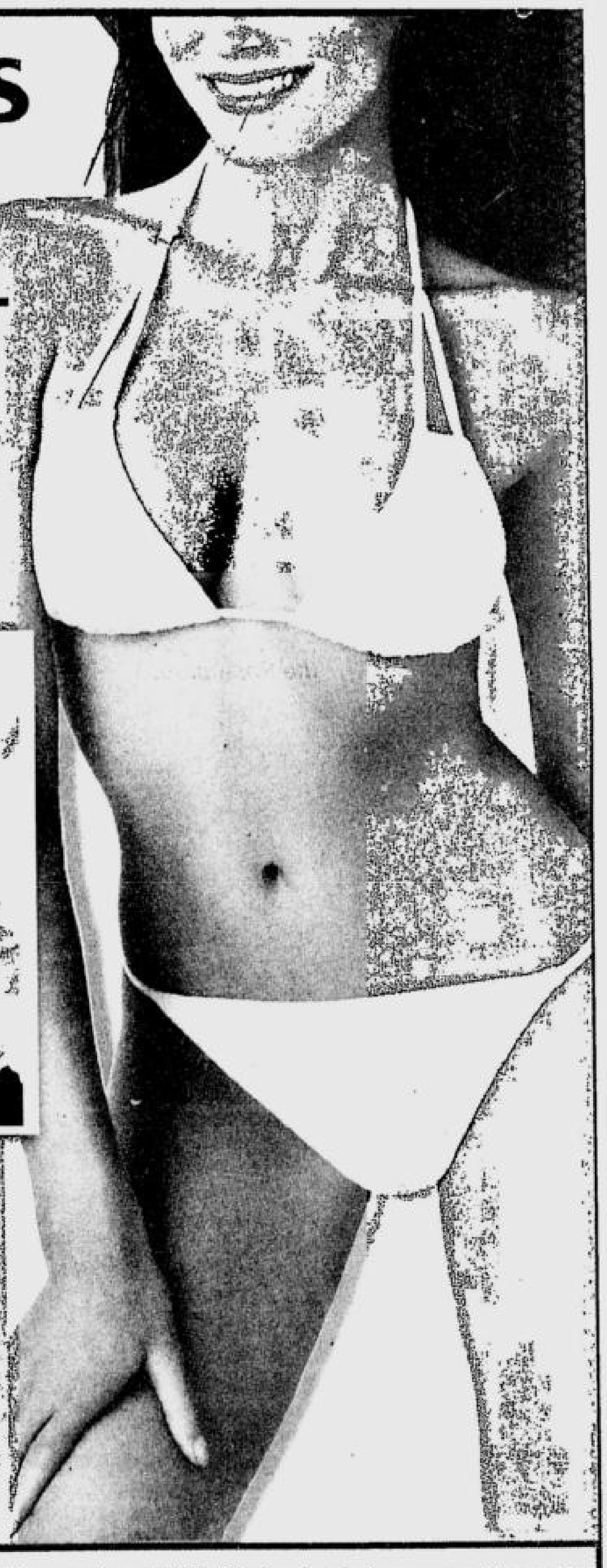

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IPPs among RP's top 1,000 firms–Lacson

By Cynthia D. Balana

NINE independent power producers (IPPs) responsible for the increased power purchased adjustments (PPA) reflected in consumers' electricity bills are among the top 1,000 corporations in the country, Sen. Panfilo Lacson revealed yesterday.

Lacson said that in 2001 alone, these IPPs registered gross profit margins ranging from 58.4 percent to 98.2 percent, or an average of 71.64 percent.

"While the Filipino people . . . suffer from the burden of added costs brought about by the greed and insatiability of those responsible for these onerous contracts," he said, "these IPPs continue to rake in unconscionable profits."

Lacson particularly cited Southern Energy Quezon Inc., which operates the 700-megawatt Pagbilao power plant, ranked third in terms of net income with P6.209 billion, and Southern Energy Pangasinan Inc. which operates the 1000-megawatt Sual plant, ranked fourth with P5.18 billion.

The two companies had gross profit margins of 72.6 percent and 66.1 percent, respectively, Lacson said.

Southern Energy Quezon was 49th in the top 1,000 list, with P10.43 billion in gross revenues, and Southern Energy Pangasinan was 46th, with P11.44 billion.

Meralco's First Gas Power Corp. ranked 84th in gross revenues (P6.1 billion) and 18th in net income (P2.57 billion) with a gross profit margin of 62.2 percent.

Its sister company, First Power Corp. ranked 509th in gross revenues (P1.086 billion) and 57th in net income (P1.068 billion) with a gross profit margin of 98.2 percent.

First Gas Holdings Corp. ranked 215th in gross revenues (P2.61 billion) and 17th in net income (P2.6 billion), also with 98.2 percent gross profit margin.

Lacson said First Gas did not generate electricity from January 2001 to January 2002, and yet Meralco paid it nearly P15 billion.

GMA consoles victims of train-jeepney crash

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo visited last night the survivors of a train and jeepney collision in Sta. Ana, Manila, which left one man dead and 11 others injured.

The President arrived at the Ospital ng Maynila, where 10 of the injured where taken, at around 9:15 p.m., gave out envelopes to the victims' relatives, and left 15 minutes later, said Dr. Marlou Padua.

The lone fatality, Philip Lavilla, was declared dead on arrival at the Philippine General Hospital, said SP04 Lito Jimenez of the Sta. Ana police station.

Jimenez said the accident happened at around 6:30 p.m. at the corner of Osmeña Highway and San Andres Bukid. The victims were passengers of a jeepney bound for Guadalupe, Makati, from Leon Guinto St. in Manila.

"The jeep was about to cross Osmeña Highway when a train approached," Jimenez said. "Despite that, the driver still decided to go for it."

Jimenez said the driver was arrested and taken to the Manila police traffic section. But police there told the INQUIRER at around 10 p.m. that no suspect had been handed over to them.

Jimenez identified the injured as Rodinon Barande, 21; Maria Pilapil, 20; Rosemarie Kugira, 23; Jacinto Lacarte, 20; Homer Dieta, 38; Jocelyn Angeles, 54; Myrna Cancopia, 43; Rachel Faran, 18; Glendalyn Tamora, 26; Jun Trinidad, 16, and Leemuel Casala, 37. *Philip C. Tubeza*

The Netherlands
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Freedom Fighter!
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A YOUNG supporter of Jose Ma. Sison puts up a poster denouncing the US and The Netherlands for their treatment of the exiled communist leader, at the Dutch Embassy in Makati City yesterday. AP

Militant groups take fight for Joma to Dutch Embassy

By Leila B. Salaverria

CONCERNED about their exiled leader, militant groups yesterday trooped to the Dutch Embassy in Makati to condemn the Dutch government for cutting off Jose Ma. Sison's social welfare benefits, and to demand that the embassy send him a care package.

Anakbayan-NCR secretary general Wilson Paguyo said the group delivered a letter of appeal for the Dutch government to reconsider its actions against the founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). In the meantime, the letter suggested, a care package of canned goods, rice, medicine, water and other essentials would help.

Paguyo said embassy spokesperson Maurits ter Kuile promised to send the supplies to Sison, who has been living in exile in Utrecht.

In a statement, Paguyo castigated the Dutch government for complying with the United States' request to freeze Sison's assets. This, he said, was a "shameless demonization" of "this pseudo-neutral ground (The Netherlands)," especially since it happened after the US listed the CPP and its armed wing, the New People's Army, among "foreign terrorist organizations."

The protesters brought with them mock seals of The Netherlands and the United States, with captions that read, "Welcome to the Dutch Embassy . . . Philippine Annex of the US State Department" and "The Netherlands: 53rd State of the USA in Europe."

Paguyo said the Dutch government had frozen the bank accounts of Sison and his wife Julieta, which had a total of "only 1,000 euros," or about P55,000. He warned that this could be a "prelude" to ultimately handing the CPP leader over to the US.

Anakbayan-NCR was joined by the League of Filipino Students-NCR, National Union of Students of the Philippines-NCR, and Kabataan Laban sa Agresyon at Gyera (Kalasag).

Also yesterday, one of Sison's overseas support groups announced that Dutch clergymen and members of European parliaments have expressed their support for the call to restore the CPP founder's democratic and civil rights.

Defend, the committee that oversees the campaign, reported in an e-mail statement that 23 parliamentarians from Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden have signed a letter to Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende asking the Dutch government to drop the CPP and NPA from the list of terrorist organizations.

The letter stressed that the CPP and NPA are major components of the National Democratic Front (NDF), which is engaged in peace talks with the Philippine government, and that Sison is the NDF's chief consultant in the negotiations.

Defend said it expected more international supporters to sign the letter in the next few days.

In statements coursed through Defend, two Dutch clergymen, Archbishop Joris Vercammen of the Old Catholic Church of Utrecht and Dominee Hans Visser of Paulus Kerk of Rotterdam, echoed the parliamentarians' sentiments.

Visser said it was "ridiculous" for the Dutch government to put Sison in the same league as Osama bin Laden.

Vercammen cautioned that the actions of the US and Dutch governments would have dire implications on the ongoing peace negotiations between the NDF and the Philippine government. *With Delfin Mallari Jr. and Diwa Aquino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

PEA officials host media road tour

From page A1

fairs (Copa) whom the President recently called "*anay*" or termite, was paid P14 million to help Tagud make the exposé. The PEA chair said Tagud could not have handled by himself the "efficient media releases" on the exposé.

"Let them lie for as long as they want," Saycon said. "As far as Copa is concerned, we have strong evidence against Villareal and his directors."

Saycon said Villareal had associated him with Tagud so the PEA director would "automatically" draw the ire of the President.

But Saycon admitted that Tagud, whom he said he first met six years ago, sought his help on Sept. 13 through a common friend, Jose "Pepe" Sarmiento.

Saycon said Copa held an emergency meeting on the same day to assess Tagud's evidence and later decided to transmit the documents to higher authorities. Guillermo Carague, chair of the Commission on Audit, got a copy three days later, while Malacañang received another copy the following day.

"We advised (Tagud) to go public because he had been receiving death threats," Saycon said. "The only protection he has is to share what he knows to the people."

More damaging evidence

He said Copa would release more damaging evidence against officers of the PEA in connection with the road scam.

"The evidence is strong . . . definitely the PEA chair and directors will be jailed," he told the INQUIRER. The pieces of evidence include checks, transmittals and other documents showing how the P600 million was disbursed and who benefited from the overpricing, according to Saycon.

He said Copa also had videotapes showing how PEA officials "muscled their way" in meetings to overrule people like Tagud in decisions involving anomalous projects. In some of the meetings, he said, the officials supposedly discussed at least three price adjustments of contracts, including the controversial boulevard at the Manila Bay reclamation area.

Copa will release the evidence once the Senate or the House of Representatives begins conducting an inquiry into the alleged overpricing of the President Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard, Saycon said..

"It's a simple case of fraud and thievery," said Tagud, who went to Malacañang yesterday to submit a letter asking President Macapagal-Arroyo's permission for him to go on leave as director of the PEA. He said he saw neither the President nor Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

"I would like to heed the call of the members of the Senate that officials of the PEA who are involved in the current controversy go on leave so that an independent investigation will not be tainted with suspicion of manipulation," Tagud told the President in his letter.

"It is unfortunate Madam President that the anomaly that I reported to you has degenerated into name-calling and insinuations of political color that tend to drag unrelated personalities into the controversy," he said, without elaborating.

If Ms Macapagal allowed it, Tagud said he would go on leave "because I believe this is necessary under the circumstances and this is the honorable thing to do."

In his letter, he said: "I have kept myself within the relevant issues and refuse to dignify irrelevant side issues intended to muddle the real situation."

Asked about the check from Legaspi, Tagud said: "I have not received nor demanded any check (from JDLC)." The whistle-blower explained that it was only after news of the PEA road scam broke out that the camp of Saycon tried to get in touch with him.

Legaspi, the contractor whom Tagud said overpriced his 2.3-km portion of the road, earlier charged that PEA assistant general manager Pelagio Lalap extorted P2.1 million in cash and P14 million in check from him, allegedly on Tagud's behalf.

Legaspi said he paid the cash but did not fund the check for P14 million. The amount, he said, represented 5 percent of the P281-million Bay Boulevard project, which the PEA approved as a supplemental contract.

But Tagud said this separate contract was disapproved after he and several other PEA directors objected.

Tagud denied the allegation of extortion, saying it was part of a smear campaign against him.

It was not clear if the P14 million referred to by Villareal was the same amount Legaspi had claimed was extorted from him.

Asked why the supposed destabilizers chose the PEA project to hit the President, Villareal said: "I guess it just had the combination of a scam that will land on the headlines."

It was Villareal's idea to name the boulevard after the President's father. It was inaugurated by the President on her birthday in April.

"It's a nice boulevard enjoyed by thousands of people. They said it's overpriced so people would say they are driving in an overpriced boulevard. Then it is named after the father of the President during her incumbency so I guess the combination is there (to exploit)," the PEA chair said.

Doña Eva Macapagal

The whole 5.1-km road and the bridge built by Shoemart Inc. were named after the President's late father. Two other bridges were also named after her mother and grandfather, respectively. The bridge built by R1 Consortium was named Doña Eva Macapagal Bridge, while the one built by Legaspi was named the Engineer Juan Macaraeg Bridge.

Villareal earlier told the INQUIRER that the construction of the boulevard was rushed after the President complained to him about being caught in traffic on Roxas Boulevard last year.

He said it was then meant to be Ms Macapagal's "gift to the people" because it was her first major infrastructure project.

The boulevard aimed to decongest Roxas Boulevard and spur the development of the 750-hectare Manila Bay reclamation area, which is now being developed by PEA into the "Bay City."

Villareal said he did not regret naming the boulevard after the "Poor Boy from Lubao," the President's father. "No, not at all. I'm very proud of the boulevard. It's very beautiful and well-built. It's going to last a long, long time, long after this scandal blows over," he said. Villareal said the people of Cavite were particularly very happy with the alternate route which saves them time on the road.

At a press conference and tour, the three PEA officials presented figures, maps and photos of what was originally called the Central Boulevard Project and debunked Tagud's allegations that the project was overpriced and anomalous.

Tagud, in his letter to the President, said the Macapagal boulevard was the most expensive asphalt road in the country.

'Really expensive'

"The (PDMB) may well be the most expensive boulevard in the country but it is not overpriced," Beriña said.

He admitted that the road and bridge built by Legaspi were "really expensive" because the actual soil condition on his portion was not as good as those on the portions where Shoemart and R1 Consortium built sections of the road.

Legaspi built the road on the two ends of the stretch, on the Financial Center where the Philippine National Bank and Government Service Insurance System buildings stand, and on the CBP (Central Boulevard Project) 2 and Asiaworld. Shoemart and R1 Consortium, through its construction firm DM Wenceslao, built the middle portions. They were to be paid in reclaimed land.

Beriña said Legaspi was originally awarded a P584.3-million contract in 1999, but its total contract price to date amounted to P837.3 million because of adjustments in cost and work.

The additional variations amounted to P252.9 million. Beriña said these included "additional works" worth P126.4 million, P51.6 million for the construction of the Seaside Extension, and P74.7 million for the inland bridge connecting the boulevard to the Aseana property.

He said the extension, which connects the Macapagal boulevard to Roxas Boulevard and has a nice promenade fronting Manila Bay, was covered by Variation Order No. 2 that the PEA board had approved.

Beriña said there was a contract price adjustment of P42.4 million, a P4.7-million Variation Order No. 4, due to the delay in the release of the loan and overruns (difference between the bid and final quantities) amounting to P79.3 million. He said the cost adjustments did not require presidential approval contrary to the claim of Tagud.

No review

The Estrada administration required a review by the Office of the President of contracts worth P50 million and above. But the Macapagal administration did not enforce this because it wanted to streamline government operations, according to Beriña.

He said the PEA complied with all requirements in the changes in costs, all of which were approved by the COA.

Beriña said Tagud was wrong in comparing Legaspi's cost with SM and R1 when he came up with the P600-million overprice.

He said SM and R1 supplied all the cement and reinforcing steel bars to their contractors, whereas Legaspi did all the work for soil consolidation and the road. The soil on SM and R1's portions was ready for road construction at the time the joint venture agreement was signed, according to Beriña. He said the condition of the soil on Legaspi's portion was totally different.

"After our soil investigation, it was found that there were 2 meters of mud that needed to be taken out and consolidated with geotextiles and S1 sand," Beriña said.

Asked why only the two ends covering Legaspi's portions were not consolidated, Villareal said it was because those were previously reclaimed by a Belgian firm paid by SM.

Beriña said the "subgrade works" done to consolidate the soil cost P298.4 million, which accounts for Phase 1 of Legaspi's controversial contract.

He said the P584.3-million contract was broken down in two phases because at the time of the award in 1999, the PEA was only able to borrow P300 million from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

Phase 1 accounted for subgrade works on the Financial Center Area, the CBP2 and Asiaworld, he said, and Phase 2 was pavement structure works for the same areas that cost P285.8 million.

Beriña said Tagud was confused that Legaspi's original contract was reduced to P298 million, which was Phase 1.

He said Tagud's theory of overprice was also "based on a wrong frame" as he compared it with the unit cost of SM and R1.

Tagud earlier said Legaspi's road was six times more expensive than SM and its bridge four times more. He said the per-linear cost of SM's road was P54,000, while that of Legaspi's was P302,000.

He also said SM built its bridge at P552,000 per linear meter, while Legaspi built its own at P1.9 million.

Cariño said all cost adjustments were made in accordance with the law, principally Presidential Decree 1594, which allows price escalation between the time of bidding and actual implementation.

"We've conducted ourselves in a manner befitting our position . . . We do not deserve the bad publicity that we've been getting in the last few days," said Cariño, formerly dean of the UP College of Urban Planning. *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

Palace unfazed by signature drive for Poe

By Carlito Pablo and Rocky Nazareno

HE might be the uncrowned "king" of Philippine movies but being an actor is far different from being President of a country.

Thus did Malacañang shrug off reports of a signature campaign having been started to convince popular movie star Fernando Poe Jr. to run for President in 2004.

Poe is a very close friend of jailed ex-president Estrada who is known to be encouraging his buddy to run.

"It (a draft campaign) cannot be avoided because FPJ has many fans," said Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye in an interview with dzMM radio. But Bunye suggested being good at acting did not necessarily mean one could be good at being President too.'

Political observers have said that with his legions of fans and the endorsement of Estrada—who continues to command a solid base of followers—Poe could give President Macapagal-Arroyo a stiff fight in 2004.

But the ruling Lakas-NUCD is not at all intimidated.

"We will give him an exciting contest," said Lakas executive director Jose Ma. Rufino. "I wish him good luck. See us in 2004."

"We consider everyone a threat but we're not afraid of him," he added.

Rufino, the presidential adviser on political and ecclesiastical affairs, said in a teleconference with Malacañang reporters that no one was trying to stop Poe from aspiring for the highest office of the land.

But Poe was welcome to join Lakas if he should decide to make a run for any public office—except the presidency, of course.

"He can run in our party," Rufino said. "If I were to be consulted, a slot in the Senate will be best for him and he will be a sure winner."

Poe, who has repeatedly denied any political plans in the past, has been recently tight-lipped amid the speculations about him.

The talk in political circles is that the opposition may field a ticket led by Poe, with Sen. Panfilo Lacson, another close Estrada associate, as the actor's running mate.

Commenting on Poe's qualifications, Lacson yesterday said "he's over 40 and knows how to read and write".

"Anybody can defeat President Macapagal-Arroyo . . . because of the mismanagement of the government," Lacson said.

He said this was the main reason why so many were aspiring to run for President in 2004.

Lacson himself has been mentioned as among those setting their sights on the presidency but yesterday he denied that he had any such plans.

TERRORISM AND GLOBALIZATIONF REUTERS

Vice President Teofisto Guingona addresses the Int'l Ecumenical Conference on Terrorism in a Globalized World at the Bay View Park Hotel yesterday.

Suspended Lung Center director still seen at work

By Armand N. Nocum

JOSE Pepito Amores, the medical doctor who blew the whistle on the alleged multimillion-peso Lung Center of the Philippines scam, has complained that the suspended LCP director was continuing to report for work where he has access to vital documents related to the case against him.

Amores said the suspended LCP director Fernando Melendres was allegedly openly defying the suspension order of Malacañang as well as attempting to influence the outcome of the investigation of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission.

"His presence here negates the very purpose of the preventive suspension order issued by Malacañang," Amores said in a telephone interview.

Melendres is accused of allegedly procuring materials for the hospital without bidding, falsifying public documents and violating auditing rules regarding cash advances, among other charges.

Last week, he was ordered suspended for 90 days to pave the way for the PAGC investigation.

Malacañang's move apparently stemmed from Amores' charge that Melendres had also made allegedly questionable investments of some P150 million in LCP funds which had been intended for the reconstruction of the center.

Amores has filed a case of plunder against Melendres before the Office of the Ombudsman.

"Everyone here feels threatened by his continuing presence here," Amores said, even as he accused Melendres of allegedly forcing contractual employees and engineers at the LCP to stage protest rallies during office hours.

But he said that most of the 40 full-time physicians and 4,000 regular employees of the LCP, including its labor union, wanted Melendres booted out.

In a telephone interview, Melendres admitted continuing to go to the center, but not to work in the director's office but simply to hold clinic at the hospital.

"Can I no longer attend to my patients or meet persons symphatizing with me?" he said.

He also denied pressuring LCP employees, saying the he did not have the means nor the will to do it.

As for the contractual employees, he said they were willing to "die" for him since it was he who freed them from the clutches of exploitative labor agencies.

As this developed, more than 40 doctors have written to President Macapagal-Arroyo, expressing their "unwavering support" for Melendres and asking that he be given justice.

Who's afraid of House Bill 4110?

By Frank Cimatu,
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Why are politicians withdrawing from being associated with the Reproductive Health Care Act?

Only one local official attended a forum here meant to kick off the Baguio leg of the information drive for House Bill 4110.

"They don't want to have a photo (opportunity) in this kind of forum," said Baguio Vice Mayor Betty Lourdes Tabanda who explained that her colleagues were wary of the issue.

There is no mystery as to the reason, said Eden Divinagracia, executive director of the Philippine NGO Council on Population, Health and Welfare (PNGOC) and co-chair of the Reproductive Health Advocacy Network (RHAN).

The politicians were all afraid of the Catholic Church, she said.

The Church has labeled the bill as "anti-marriage, anti-family and anti-life."

Two of the co-authors of HB 4110, Representatives Felix William Fuentebella and Alfredo Maranon Jr., have withdrawn their authorship, she said.

The reason given was that the bill was "pro-abortion."

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, the author of the parallel Senate Bill 2325 is hard put looking for co-authors in the upper chamber.

Curiously enough, a December 2000 survey by Pulse Asia, the Futures Group and the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation showed that most voters were supportive of candidates favoring family planning.

In that survey, 80 percent of the 1,200 respondents said they favored candidates supporting a program on women's health and 69 percent said they would support candidates in favor of giving married couples free choice in what family planning method to use.

It also showed that 76 percent of the respondents would support candidates who favor a law on population issues while 94 percent of Catholic respondents would favor candidates who are pro-family planning.

Divinagracia said some local governments have no family planning programs because the officials heading these offices were "pro-life."

"Is this the government that we want? It is the right of every citizen to be provided basic health services, shelter and other needs. Reproductive health is a social concern," she said.

The remaining authors of the bill are Representatives Bellaflor Angara-Castillo (Aurora), Darlene Antonino-Custodio (South Cotabato), Loretta Ann Rosales (Akbayan) and Krisel Lagman-Luistro (Albay).

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'Nanay Mameng' off to network in Italy

WHO says an urban poor person can never get out of the slums?

Carmen "Nanay Mameng" Deunida, the urban poor leader who is president of the Kalipunan ng Damayang Mahihirap (Kadamay), is now in Italy to forge alliances with foreign urban poor groups attending a seminar on urban planning and development from Sept. 27 to 28.

Deunida left for Italy three days ago and will be there until October for meetings with other urban poor organizations, according to Yolanda Alcantara of Kadamay.

She is the sole Philippine representative to the forum and all her expenses are being paid for by a French affiliate of Kadamay in the Philippines, Alcantara said.

One of the purposes of Deunida's trip is to solicit support for the Kadamay's protest movement against the government's policy on informal settlers and illegal sidewalk vendors, which the group has called "oppressive".

Kadamay is at the forefront of a campaign to oust Bayani Fernando, the chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), for his allegedly indiscriminate campaign to rid the streets of rowdy vendors and other obstructions.

In Italy, Deunida will share Kadamay's local experience with similar organizations from other Third World countries and work to gain their support, Alcantara said.

Many of the groups she will be targeting are based in other Southeast Asian countries and India. *Christian V. Esguerra*

Subic chief unaware of oil stockpiling plan

CLARK ZONE—The Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority chair has said he was "not aware" of any Philippine government plan to make the former Subic Naval Base into a regional oil stockpiling site for Asia.

Neither have the SBMA nor the El Paso-Coastal merger, the operator of Subic's Fuel Farm, been consulted on the proposal, SBMA chair Felicito Payumo told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He said he learned of the plan only from newspaper reports.

Toshikazu Masuyama of the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry announced the plan on Sunday during a meeting of East Asian countries which held talks for the first time on regional oil security.

Matsuyama said the plan was aimed at protecting the region from future oil fluctuations amid rising tensions in the Middle East where the oil-producing countries are located.

"That's not official," Payumo said, referring to the proposal.

But he said Subic did have the capacity to host a regional oil depot.

The former Subic Naval Base -- once considered the most comprehensive and most strategic facility of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region -- handled and processed more than four million barrels of fuel a month.

It supplied the former Clark Air Base in Pampanga with aviation fuel through a 41-mile underground pipeline connected to Subic.

With 22 tanks in its Fuel Farm, Subic was considered then as the "largest facility of its kind in the world," according to the US military publication "The Weekly Nation."

Both US bases were closed in 1991 after the Senate rejected the extension of the 1947 Philippine-US military bases agreement.

The former US bases, which are now special economic zones, are owned by the government and managed by state-owned corporations like the SBMA.

The depot, rehabilitated after Subic and Clark were converted into special economic zones, now stores 2.4 million barrels, or 750 million liters, of fuel at any given time.

Payumo said only one-third of the depot is used by the American-owned El Paso-Coastal.

He saidhe would prefer that the depot first provide the needs of the country's energy industry. "It is government-owned and the government can use it for its own oil security," he said.

But he did not see anything wrong for the government to also offer it as a support facility to the regional oil security plan, Payumo said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, September 24, 2002
25th Week in Ordinary Time

Gospel: Lk 8:19-21

The mother and relatives of Jesus came to him, but they could not get to him because of the crowd. Someone told him, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and wish to meet you." Then Jesus answered, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

Commentary

In contrast to both Mark and Matthew, Luke has this passage take place after the parable of the sower and its explanation. In this manner he highlights that true relationship with Jesus consists above all in doing the word. It is the word that counts more than anything else. Even Mary's dignity as Mother of Jesus may not be separated from this. Her doing the word is what makes her truly the Mother of the Word, the Lord Jesus. As the great St. Bernard holds, she conceived Jesus first in her heart before she conceived him in her womb. May she lead us to be zealous doers of the word.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

MERCANTILE LAW/COMMERCIAL LAW (INSURANCE)—Insurable interest—Section 3 of the Insurance Code states that any contingent or unknown event, whether part or future, which may indemnify a person having an insurable interest against. Every person has an insurable interest in the life or health of himself as provided in Section 10 of the Insurance Code. In the case at bar, the insurable interest of respondent's husband in obtaining the health care agreement was his own health. The health care agreement was in the nature of non-life insurance, which is primarily a contract of indemnity. Once the member incurs hospital, medical or any other expense arising from sickness, injury or other stipulated contingent, the health care provider must pay for the same to the extent agreed upon under the contract. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Ynares-Santiago, Philamcare Health Systems, Inc. v. Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 125678, March 18, 2002]

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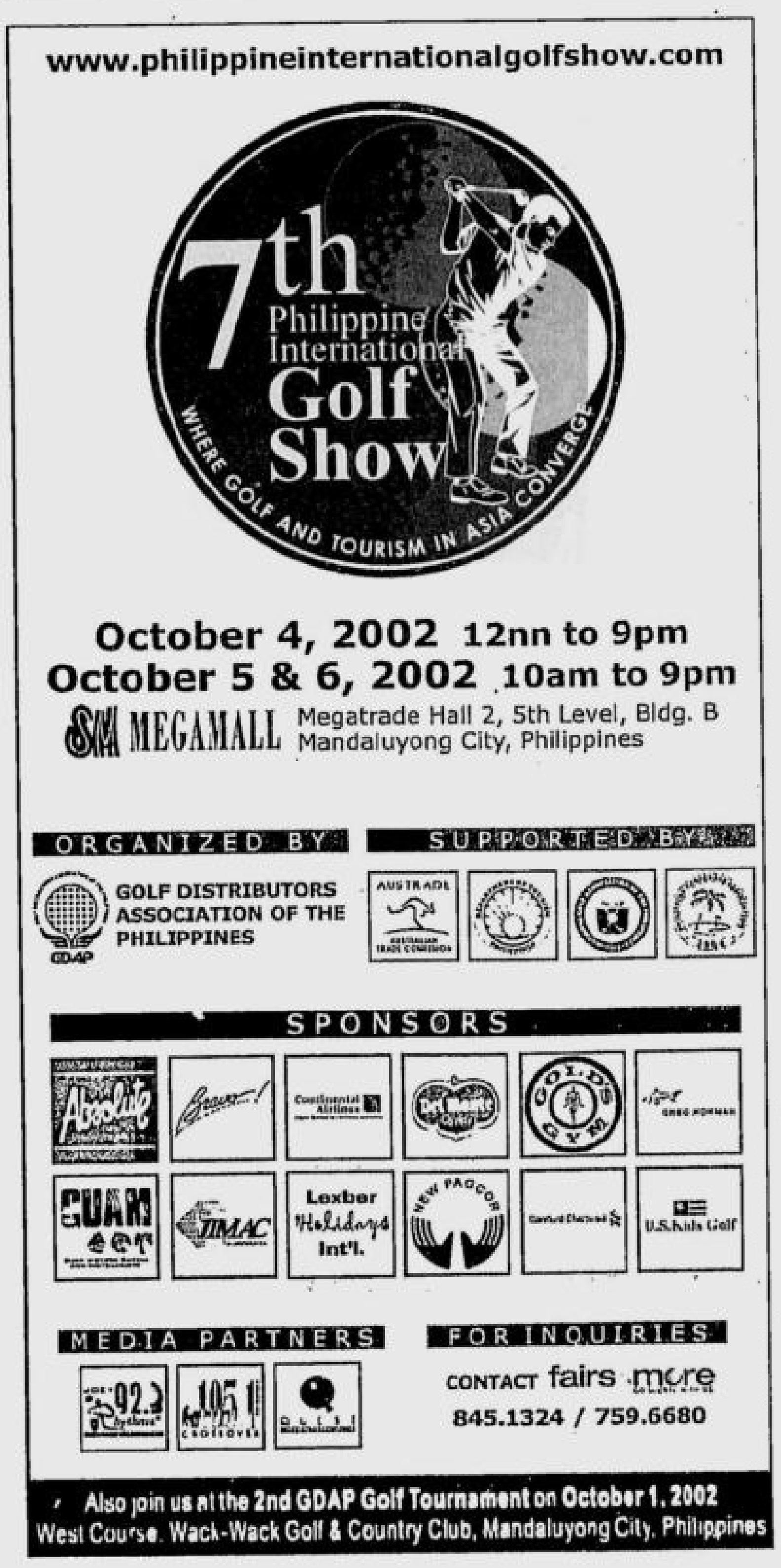
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Poor boy

EDITORIAL

THE DRIVE to rehabilitate the reputation of President Diosdado Macapagal, a fate the "poor boy from Lubao" richly deserves, has taken a detour—down the so-called road to perdition. In a twist of misfortune, the detour even bears his name.

The allegations of Sulficio Tagud, a member of the board of the Public Estates Authority, are serious, not least because he is privy to the agency's secrets. But the jury is still out on whether or not the construction of the President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue in the Manila Bay reclamation area is overpriced. And the politics inside asset-rich agencies like the PEA can be complicated in the best of times.

Sen. Joker Arroyo is understandably wary of launching yet another high-profile congressional investigation by the Senate blue ribbon committee, not because he wants to protect the administration he is a part of at all costs, but because the committee simply has too much in its hands already. It is not only the Senate that will suffer investigative indigestion; a scandal-weary public has had enough of congressional probes that begin with a sensational appetizer but, after a confusing main course, end with a tepid helping of dessert.

But now that the issue is joined—either Tagud is telling the truth about a P600-million adventure in corruption or he is not—it is incumbent upon the administration to seek a resolution. The blue ribbon committee still seems the best bet to do a credible job of it. If, as Arroyo has suggested, the Senate public works committee headed by Sen. Ramon Revilla would lead the probe, no resolution would be forthcoming. Revilla is too ill, too inexperienced, too indulgent, to lend the investigation the necessary credibility. (Recall how, while probing the latest public works scam, Revilla admitted receiving a Mitsubishi Pajero for his use from the Department of Public Works and Highways. Stung by public criticism, he promptly returned the Pajero—promptness being relative in the rarefied reaches of the Senate, of course. Revilla, who in effect bears oversight responsibility for the DPWH, returned the vehicle after years of use.) It would be better if the blue ribbon committee would take the lead.

But while we wait for the administration to decide whether they want this latest scandal resolved or not, President Macapagal-Arroyo's advisers should take the time to reconsider their unofficial policy of renaming every other government project after the President or her father.

Cong Dadong, in particular, has been ill-served. He has been used by ambitious officials seeking to curry favor with his daughter. The international airport in Clark—a white elephant in the making, unless the administration moves decisively to decongest the Metro Manila gateway—is a case in point.

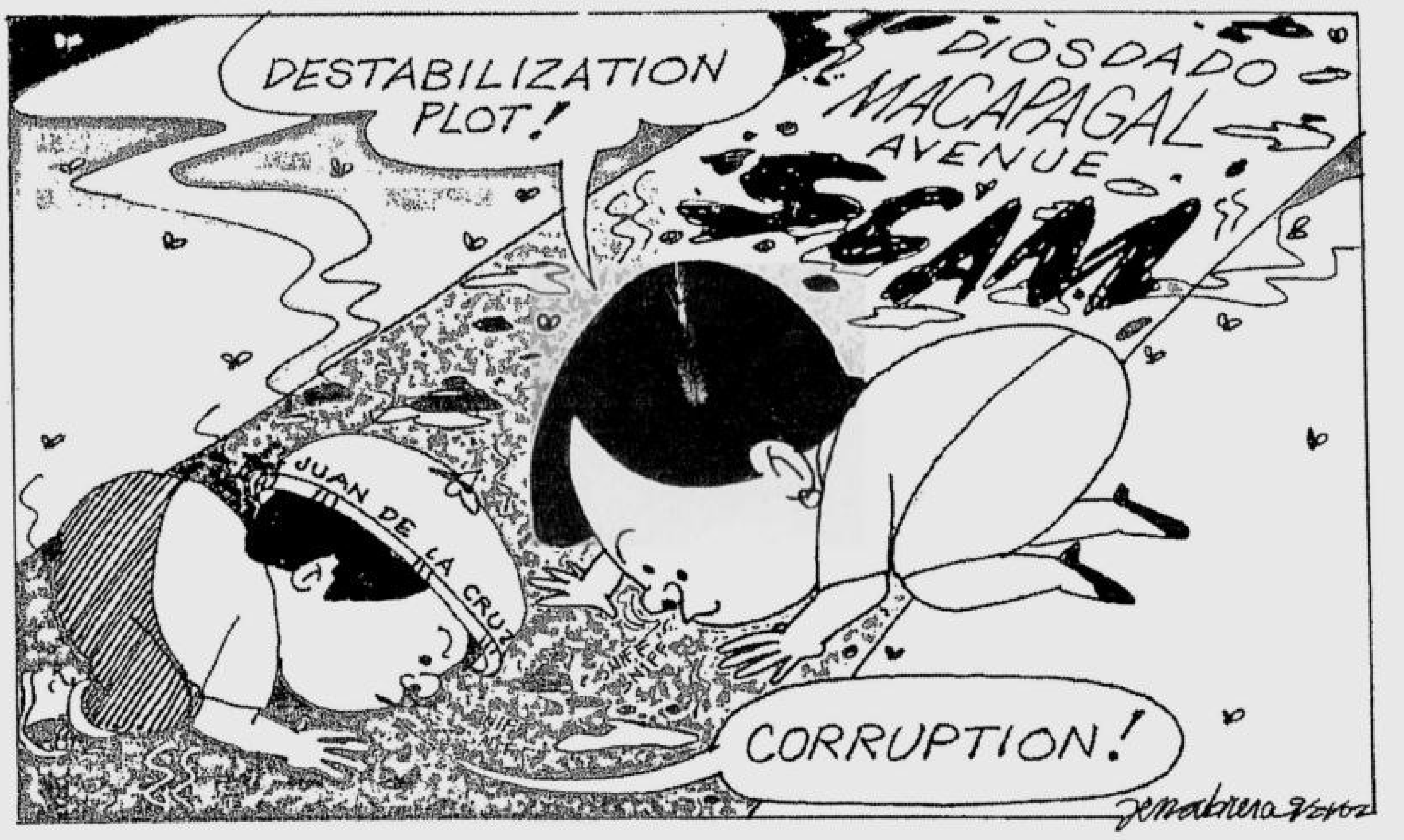
The new P200 bill, an idea of Bangko Sentral Gov. Rafael Buenaventura and other members of the Monetary Board, bears the image of the first Macapagal on the obverse. On the reverse, however, the second Macapagal is shown taking her admittedly historic oath at the Edsa Shrine.

Naming the reclamation area highway after Macapagal was the idea of PEA chair Ernest Villareal, or so he told the INQUIRER last week. He recalls the President replying: "Why not?"

If he had the President's best interests in mind, he would have said: "Well, because it would make you look hungry and cheap."

Naming the Clark airport after Cong Dadong must have seemed like a no-brainer. He hails from Pampanga, and the former US air base is in the same province. The decision must have seemed only logical. But public perception follows a different logic. After a 20-year-long nightmare during which too many public facilities were named after various branches and sometimes even lowly twigs of the Marcos and Romualdez family trees, the public has been stirred awake. Now it sees through politicians' attempts to perpetuate their name through patently unfair or unseemly means.

Unseemly was the last thing one would have used to describe the first Macapagal. Buried by the martial law era, his name has slowly recovered its former luster. It is tragic that, in the rush of the second Macapagal administration to honor him, ordinary people are now beginning to associate him with scandal and perdition.



The third Don Eugenio letter to Marcos

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

(*Continued from yesterday*)

THESE are excerpts from the third letter of the Lopez family patriarch, Don Eugenio Lopez Sr., to President Marcos in 1973 offering to sell their shares in Meralco. In the first letter, Don Eugenio offered to sell the family holdings in Meralco to a cooperative with the assistance of the government. In the second letter, after the Marcos administration replied that it was not interested in acquiring Meralco, Don Eugenio offered to divest itself of the ownership and control of Meralco. In the third letter below, he is offering to sell the family shares to a foundation created with Marcos' approval.

Here are excerpts:

"Your Excellency will recall that on March 20, 1973, I offered to sell all the shares that my brother, Fernando, and I and the members of our respective families own in Meralco Securities Corp. As I stated in my cable to you last Sept. 13, 1973, we still feel that in line with your call to the private sector to meet the laudable objectives of the New Society, we would like to have the opportunity to participate in your program to democratize wealth and property for the greater good of our people.

"I am writing this letter to indicate the details that I hope would enable your Excellency to make a decision on my offer.

"As you know, Benpres is the holder of 27.2 percent of the outstanding capital stock of Meralco Securities Corp. (MSC). I would like to submit for your consideration a proposal pursuant to which Benpres would sell the holdings of MSC shares, on the basis of a self-liquidating investment, to a foundation created with your approval. The price at which such shares would be sold by Benpres would be equal to the net assets of MSC related to such shares in which all assets of MSC would be valued at present value, except that MSC's holdings at capital stock of Manila Electric Company (Meco) would be valued on the basis of the present value of Meco's assets on Dec. 31, 1968, as previously determined by the Philippine Public Service Commission and approved by the Philippine Supreme Court, plus subsequent net additions at cost. The foundation's obligation to make payment for this purchase price would be limited to dividends and distributions received by it with respect to the MSC shares (or, if MSC should be subsequently dissolved, upon distribution of the securities and other assets received by the foundation as a result of such dissolution). Based upon date as of June 30, 1973, the aggregate sale price to the foundation to be thus received by Benpres would be approximately P133 million, net of the balance of Benpres' subscription for founders' shares of MSC amounting to about P9.6 million.

"Benpres had outstanding at June 30, 1973 aggregate indebtedness of approximately P81.9 million. The purchase price to be paid by the foundation would be evidenced by (1) a note of the foundation payable to the order of Benpres' bank creditors in a principal amount equal to Benpres' indebtedness to such banks, and (2) a note payable to Benpres for the balance of such purchase price. It is proposed that the foundation's note to the banks be predicated on amortization over a period of eight years beginning with the third year following consummation of the sale with amortization installments being paid quarterly. Amortization of the principal of the notes to the banks and to Benpres would be pro rata.

"First National City Bank has already agreed to restructure Benpres' indebtedness substantially under the terms and conditions described above. Moreover, we have been able to get its consent that the interest rate on the foundation's note to FNCB would be set at the current rates Benpres is paying for its loans to FNCB minus one-half percent in consideration of the proposed security to be provided by the Philippine National Bank under this loan restructuring. Please note that a principal condition of FNCB is PNB's agreement to grant the foundation a clean letter of credit in an amount equal to both the principal and interest to secure its indebtedness. We expect to get a similar consent from the other major creditors of Benpres within this week.

"Upon acceptance of this offer, Benpres will immediately execute, in favor of whomsoever your Excellency will designate, a voting trust. In addition, I will ask the individual members of our families to execute the necessary proxies in favor of whomsoever your Excellency will designate.

"I trust, your Excellency, that you will approve the foregoing plan so that it can be implemented in the shortest time possible. If you wish to make any modifications of this plan, please feel free to do so because, as I had told you in my letter of March 20, I feel you are in the best position to determine where the greatest good of our people lies and because I have full faith and confidence in your judgment and fairness."

* * *

To summarize and shorten this third Don Eugenio letter to Marcos, the patriarch is offering to sell the Lopez family shares in Meralco to a foundation to be created with the approval of the government, to bail it out of its indebtedness to several banks. The price is approximately P133 million. The foundation will assume the debts of P81.9 million, the balance to be paid to Benpres.

In fairness to the Lopez family and Meralco, we will welcome a rejoinder from them.

Young and old

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

PEOPLE will be people and media will be media. There was one issue sparked by the debate between Gerhard Schroeder and Edmund Stoiber, the current chancellor and his chief rival, a couple of weeks ago that threatened to drown the devastating floods in the east, the alarming scale of unemployment in Germany and America's impending war on Iraq. That was the monumental issue of whether or not Schroeder had dyed his hair in that debate.

One newspaper commentator suggested he did and before long media took up the subject—to Schroeder's chagrin. Radio and television and the press talked about it incessantly, defenders and detractors unburdening themselves of their thoughts on it animatedly. Schroeder himself, who is in his mid 50s and who still has full crop of hair, denied it vehemently saying that was just the way his hair looked, it was completely natural. He proposed very earnestly to subject himself to inspection by experts. When the furor did not stop, he threatened to sue the commentators who continued to insist he had improved on reality.

A German political analyst told me with a completely straight face that though that seemed a small subject, it had tremendous potential for derailing Schroeder's bid for a new term. For some reason, Germans tended to distrust a candidate who dyed his hair. It suggested that the fellow was untrustworthy, one who quite literally tried to hide his true colors. One who wasn't being transparent.

Quite interestingly, some time after that, I got into a conversation with a Japanese and Korean. Both said the one thing they liked about Filipino leaders is that they tended to be young. Their own leaders tended to be geriatric, the general sentiment of the voters in their country being that only people at that age could be trusted to rule wisely. Which in fact was a wrongheaded notion. The Japanese, very typically extremely reserved, became quite animated upon seeing a photograph of Nakasone in the office of the mayor of Bonn (which sparked the conversation to begin with). "He was a dirty bastard," he said, easily finding the appropriate English words.

I said that before martial law, Filipino leaders tended to be even younger. Ferdinand Marcos was in his 40s when he won as president for the first time. Ramon Magsaysay and Benigno Aquino were even younger. The latter, who could have become the president after Marcos, was perennially at pains to meet the age limit for running for the public offices he sought. The others, if I am not mistaken, were only in their 50s and 60s when they became president.

It was martial law that grew a crop of older politicians since there were no real elections during that hiatus of 14 years. Burgeoning politicians before martial law, like Ramon Mitra, could get back into the fray only after 1986. And by then they had gone on in years. Still and all, only Fidel Ramos in post-Edsa times was in his 60s when he became president. Cory and Erap were much younger. GMA is even more so, but she is not an elected president and so does not indicate a voter preference.

But the clearest sign I saw of our predilection for youth was our spurning of Jovito Salonga in 1992 for being "old." I still think he would have made one good president. But most of the voters apparently did not think so. I myself heard it clearly articulated by some friends that Salonga was advanced in years and showed all the signs of having been slowed down by the wounds he got from the bombing of Plaza Miranda in 1971. The country, they said, needed if not someone infinitely younger at least someone more dynamic. Ramos became the choice in those elections (though Miriam Santiago will never concede that).

If there is any lesson to be learned from all this, it is simply that age does not necessarily make someone wiser, youth does not necessarily make someone more dynamic.

But I'm still in a dilemma whether or not to dye my own hair.

* * *

A visit to WDR, one of the biggest public radio-television stations in Germany, made me wonder what we ourselves our doing with PTV 4. Clearly there are differences. Public radio-TV in the West, like WDR—and Britain's BBC—are liberally subsidized and can count on a fairly good number of listeners-viewers who like serious discussion, classical and jazz music, and solid drama. Though as it is, WDR is reeling from competition from the more entertainment-minded commercial radio-TV stations.

There are limits to what we can do about public radio-TV, I grant. But surely we can do better than where PTV 4 is at now. That station has become more irrelevant, obscure and dated than the hula hoop. One e-mail writer hit the nail right on the head when she wondered bitterly to me why our taxes are being used to promote the interests of one of the most reactionary sectors of America. She was referring to the fact that PTV 4 has now become the mouthpiece of Fox Corp., which does nothing but advance George Bush's causes. The American right wants to promote itself, she said, let it advertise for it. Why should our government spend our money for that?

A very good point, and it reminds us once again that that station represents part of our blood, sweat and tears. There are in fact only two ways to go there. Either we pull the plug on it, or we do something about it. Between being a WDR or BBC and a Fox promoter or GMA drumbeater, there is a whole universe of possibilities.

It's time we started exploring them. Or else we're just wasting precious resources.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@vasia.com

Abalos in Puerto to ensure orderly election

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

COMELEC Comissioner Luz Tancangco is at it again. The controversial official, who is in charge of today's Puerto Princesa recall election against Mayor Dennis Socrates, has barred Namfrel from being accredited as a citizen's watchdog in this hotly contested election for no reason at all. The original Comelec plan evidently was to accredit Namfrel to do the quick count, as evidenced by the printing of the election returns with a copy for Namfrel. But the buzz in the Comelec is that while Tancangco received the shipment of the Namfrel copy, it was not shipped to Palawan. Instead, she kept it under lock and key—in Manila.

A couple of nights ago, Tancangco was seen having dinner in Puerta Princesa with one of the mayoral candidates, ex-Mayor Edward Hagedorn. Citizens are wondering if something is going on.

* * *

Yesterday morning, an alarmed Joe Concepcion, national chair of Namfrel, called up Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos to reiterate the earnest plea of Namfrel's provincial chair in Palawan, Teresa S. Cantillo, to reconsider the Comelec's decision not to accredit Namfrel in today's election. Apparently Tancangco, in deciding to exclude Namfrel, had told her colleagues that the Comelec itself could do the quick count ahead of its "official" count so there was no need for Namfrel. The other members, led by Abalos, must have realized that for the poll body to do both counts is folly, for as Concepcion argued, what happens if the two counts don't tally? This could affect the credibility of the exercise and spell trouble.

The other Comelec members appeared to have acquiesced to Tancangco's plan out of a desire to keep the peace within the poll body. *Mukhang ayaw ni* Abalos *ma*-Benipayo siya with the Comelec's tiger lady.

* * *

Concepcion told the media that he emphasized to the Comelec chief the need for a Namfrel quick count in order to make the recall election credible, especially in view of the fact that it is being hotly contested. Cantillo, in her letter appeal to Abalos dated Sept. 20, pointed out that in addition to its accreditation in all national and local elections since 1986, Namfrel has done quick counts for other mayoralty recall elections. So she asked why it was shut out of Puerto Princesa?

Fortunately Abalos immediately saw reason and acted decisively. He earlier assured Concepcion that he would work to overturn the earlier decision not to accredit Namfrel, an announcement that was received with great rejoicing by Puerto Princesa's volunteers, who have been preparing for weeks. Not content with that, Abalos and Commissioner Rex Borra flew to Puerto Princesa yesterday aboard an Air Force plane, and there was talk that they brought the citizen's arm documents that Tancangco had left behind.

* * *

I have followed the diplomatic tiff between Justice Secretary Hernando Perez and Chinese Ambassador Wang and was quite amused that the reason for their "quarrel" was that they were coming from different directions. Perez, steeped in our system of justice, has been explaining to the ambassador that certain steps have to be taken before the 122 Chinese fishermen, who have been detained for months in a Palawan prison for poaching, can be released. These include the payment of dollar fines and the entry of a guilty plea. On the other hand, the Chinese ambassador is doubtless used to his country's system, where the ruling Communist Party just decrees something and it's done—no ifs and buts. Thus, it was hard for him to understand Perez's inability act.

* * *

Had Perez ignored the process, he would have run afoul not only of the law but also of the various Palawan environmental organizations. The latter had held mass actions to protest the reported pressure to release the detained fishermen in time for the visit the other week of National People's Congress Chair Li Peng, China's second highest official.

The poaching problem is serious. On the day Li Peng arrived last Sept. 12, another 38 Chinese fishermen were caught in Palawan waters. The NGOs there are quite angry because the same Chinese fishermen have repeatedly been caught, and they have been concentrating on catching rare marine specimens. If this intrusion remains unchecked, the time will come when this country won't have those rare species anymore.

* * *

I was in Palawan recently to join my husband where he donated on behalf of the Philippine National Oil Corp. a certain amount to the Palawan State University to help improve the teaching of petroleum engineering in the PSU's Petroleum Institute. PNOC signed a tripartite agreement with the province, represented by Vice Governor David Ponce de Leon, and PSU. The province, through Gov. Joel Reyes, matched PNOC's donation.

In an earlier visit, my husband was impressed by the fact that PSU is the only educational institution in the country that offers a bachelor's and master's degree in petroleum engineering (not even the UP has them). He considered the setting up of the institute in Palawan quite timely now that the Asean region is actively exploring various energy sources, including petroleum. He feels that the PNOC donation is an investment in the future, for with the escalation of all these energy-related activities, more trained Filipinos will be needed. One such activity is the Malampaya natural gas joint venture between Shell Philippines, Texaco and PNOC, which was adjudged one of the 10 best in the world during the recent World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Farewell to a soap

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

THE WOMAN on radio was lamenting her fate. She had made a point of catching the last week's episodes of "Pangako sa 'Yo," ABS-CBN's top-rating primetime soap and had come home early to make sure she would catch Friday's final telecast. But, while waiting for "Pangako" to air, she fell asleep and woke up only to discover that she had slept through the much-anticipated finale.

We all had a good laugh as the hubby told us the story he heard on radio, because much the same thing happened to my daughter and myself, the two certified soap addicts in the family. After sticking with the soap for months and bearing with the many knots and kinks of the characters' life stories, we missed the final episode. I had dinner and a movie date with friends, she had a performance of Ballet Manila's "Giselle" at the Star Theater.

Ironically, the only one in the family to catch "Pangako's" denouement was the hubby, who had, over the months, denounced soap operas as the bane of his existence. Banished from the bedroom from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. most weekday evenings because of his constant carping and criticism, he was reduced to watching his favorite National Geographic Channel documentaries on the dining room set, allowed back in only when the last strains of "Sa Puso Ko Iingatan Ka's" theme song faded from the screen.

Friday evening, he was having dinner in a neighborhood restaurant when he noticed the waitresses, the kitchen crew and even the other customers falling silent, eyes riveted to the action on the TV. And that was how he caught "Pangako's" ending and ended up regaling us, like Scheherazade, with how the writers and producers tied up the many loose ends of the two-year old soap.

* * *

LAST night, Channel 2 unveiled a new soap that, management hopes, will replace "Pangako" in the hearts and evening schedules of its captive audience. And that could very well be the majority of Filipinos.

At the height of its hegemony, "Pangako," said ABS-CBN drumbeaters, was drawing an unbelievable audience share of over 50 percent. And with all the hype that attended the final week, complete with a "farewell party" in the Sunday noontime variety show and guestings of its stars in various shows on the network's free and cable TV channels, I won't be surprised if the last five days of "Pangako" pulled in ratings in the 60s or over.

As I've said time and again, soaps rule. With over 90 percent TV penetration around the country, and if "Pangako's" 50 percent ratings are true, then it would be safe to say that in the last two years, the overwhelming majority of Filipino families were tuned in, night after night, to soaps on Channel 2 and its chief rival, GMA-Channel 7.

Imagine the power of this medium. The soaps have made stars of actors and actresses on the downward slope to obscurity, popularized hairstyles and fashions, introduced to popular usage words and terms of endearment, and may even have spawned a new generation of Filipinos bearing such names as "Amor," "Madame Claudia," "Betty Mae" and of course "Yna" and "Angelo."

* * *

"PANGAKO" even paralleled contemporary history, offering a virtual but hyper-real version of the most soap operatic event of recent years, the impeachment trial of former President Joseph Estrada. I recently met a creative consultant with "Pangako" when we both guested on an episode on soap operas in Channel 23's "Points of View." Even as the entire nation was in the grip of impeachment fever, he said, "Pangako" was entertaining devotees with its own impeachment trial, that of Eduardo, then a provincial governor, who was driven from office because of the cruelty and human rights violations of Madame Claudia, played with exquisite villainy and fashion sense by Jean Garcia.

But it is for Madame Claudia's nemesis, the complex and contradictory "Amor Powers" that I think "Pangako" earned its real groundbreaking status. It was truly courageous, I think, for the soap's writers to conceive of a character who was neither purely virtuous nor out-and-out evil. Portrayed by Eula Valdes with subtlety and restraint, Amor Powers embodied class warfare, a woman driven to the very bowels of abject poverty and who, by dint of beauty, drive, ambition and tenacity, lifts herself out of the muck to get back at her persecutors and recover her lost child.

It also helped that for many of the episodes, Amor Powers was always fashionable and impeccably groomed. How could one woman be simultaneously a husband-grabber (stealing Eduardo's affections not just from Claudia but from his second wife as well, the ludicrously named Eidelweiss), a loving mother, a powerful businesswoman, and a vengeful and scheming plotter? Somehow, "Pangako" pulled off the feat of making Amor not just believable but even sympathetic, and introduced the mass audience to the notion of human complexity.

* * *

MY daughter informs me that because I write so often about *teleseryes*, as its creators preferred "Pangako" to be called, I have been struck from her class' list of "serious" commentators whose columns they clip for current events lessons.

I admit I was stung at first, and argued that you couldn't get more "relevant" or "significant" in the Philippine setting than when writing about soap operas. If you should poll Pinoys right now, I'll bet you'll find that what they have on their minds has little to do with graft and corruption or the latest "photo opportunism" of our President. I'll bet that as you read this, Filipinos are talking about Nora Aunor's new soap and how well it will fare as it tries to follow the path blazed by "Pangako."

US mounts energy diplomacy

NEWS ANALYSIS

Andrew Mitchell

OSAKA, Japan—As fears of a war in Iraq deepen unease over US reliance on Middle East oil, Washington is mounting an energy diplomacy campaign to secure new supplies in Africa, the former Soviet Union and North America.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham last week was in Azerbaijan, the site of multi-billion dollar exploration plays by US oil giants. Secretary of State Colin Powell toured West African oil states Angola and Gabon earlier this month to strengthen ties. And Russia's energy minister will visit the US early next month to showcase the two countries' emerging energy links.

It is a drive aimed at protecting the world's biggest oil consumer from the kind of Middle East-propelled oil price surge that is once more threatening to sap global economic health.

Diversification of energy security is a central issue at the three-day International Energy Forum in Osaka, that started on Saturday, gathering some 60 oil producing and consuming nations.

Yet all the fuss over US forays into emerging oil provinces such as the Caspian Sea region cannot mask the implacable fact that most of the world's crude is in Middle East territory, wedding the US to the region for decades to come.

"There's a drumbeat of PR going on that effectively says now we've cut a deal with Russia we don't need Saudi Arabia anymore," said Matthew Simmons of investment firm Simmons and Co. in Houston. "Wake up! Don't dream about something that's the life support of our society. We don't have a diverse energy supply."

Oil supply security has jumped to the top of the US political agenda since last September's attacks on New York and Washington dealt a blow to relations between the United States and leading world exporter Saudi Arabia. Many of the hijackers were Saudi nationals.

The United States already imports over half its 20 million barrels daily oil needs, a dependence that will rise beyond 60 percent by 2020, according to the US Department of Energy. The Middle East Gulf, which holds two thirds of world oil reserves and almost all its spare production capacity, will by then provide a quarter of US oil imports, some five million barrels daily, the DOE expects.

By contrast West Africa and the former Soviet Union combined are expected to send just 1.3 million barrels daily to US shores by 2020, just 100,000 bpd more than current levels.

"Every little bit helps. The Russia thing is very charming, makes great headlines. But at some point, the oil is still in the Gulf," said Sarah Emerson of Energy Security Analysis (ESAI) in Boston.

The Middle East-dominated oil cartel Opec has further tightened importers' nerves by cutting production to the lowest level in a decade this year to buttress oil prices. Fears that military conflict in Iraq could disrupt supplies from the Middle East has only added fuel to the fire, pushing prices up to the $30 a barrel mark that economists say spells danger for industrialized nations.

Rather than seeking to contain ravenous US demand for fossil fuels (over a quarter of all world oil is consumed in the US), the Bush administration has committed itself squarely to developing new oil and gas sources. The main initiative has been with Russia, which this year sent its first tanker of oil to the US for decades, and will early next month present plans for construction of a new export terminal big enough to handle transatlantic supertankers.

"We've had a couple of big successes. One is the dialogue with Russia—talking to Russian companies about making investments here, buying storage here, so that's been fairly successful," said Amy Jaffe of the Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University in Houston.

Next door in the former Soviet Union, US oil majors such as Exxon Mobil and ChevronTexaco have labored to open up oil export routes from the landlocked Caspian Sea states Azerbaijan and Kazakstan. And nearer to home US hopes for "hemispheric energy co-operation" is bearing some fruit. Supplies are rising sharply from synthetic oil projects in Canada, and Mexico targets record production next year, although the Bush administration's plan to open up more Alaskan reserves has all but succumbed to stiff environmental opposition.

But the sheer scale of Middle East reserves—easier to extract, and longer lasting than rivals—means that it will inevitably provide a growing share of the world's fuel needs in decades to come.

It's a fact not lost on China which has begun to court key regional suppliers Iraq and Iran in preparation for projected vast fuel import needs that will increasingly pit it in competition with the United States for resources.

By contrast, the US has imposed unilateral sanctions on Middle East producers Iran, Libya and has declined to follow Russian, Chinese and French firms in negotiating for vast Iraqi fields once sanctions are over.

The need to take a bigger stake in Middle East alone, gives the United States a motivation for seeking regime change in Iraq, say some.

"The trouble with diversifying outside the Middle East it that it's not where the oil is," said ESAI's Emerson. "One of the best things for our supply security would be to liberate Iraq."

REUTERS

Joy-ride

YOUNG BLOOD

R.K.R.

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

SINCE I was working with a start-up information technology company with deep resources, I never thought I would be a victim of the economic crunch. But I was. And you know what? Life since I lost my job has been an exciting joy-ride!

It's been a month or so since I and 19 friends received the memo from our chief executive officer. "For the past two years, the company has been experiencing loses," the memo began. I didn't have the heart to read what followed.

Suddenly, a cornucopia of emotions surged through my system. Anger. Relief. Excitement. Fear. I blinked, exhaled slowly and focused on what Tricia, who was from our human resources department, was telling us. Nothing entered my head. All I saw were visions of me torturing our witch of a CEO.

How could she do this to us? I kept asking myself. We built this company from nothing. We spent long nights and gimmick-less weekends in the office without overtime pay to make sure the project met the deadline. We toiled and labored, hoping that she would notice and appreciate the time, the love, and the sleepless hours that went into every site.

All 40 employees of the company were seething with anger. It was a good thing she went on vacation in some far-flung island with her friends that day. We could've killed her instantly.

After the anger came the withdrawal symptoms. It was difficult to let go of the routine of work. I missed my cubicle, my officemates and the lunches we had outside the office.

Although I hated my job, it is hard not to feel worthless every idle day. Having to watch those annoying Sex Bomb dancers while eating my breakfast or lunch is, of course, an altogether different story. It scares me just thinking about what to do next with my life. Taking a new career path sounds tempting, but how and where do I start? And what if I fail? Where will I go next? Fear, I have come to realize, is so powerful an emotion that it can consume your dreams and con you into thinking that you have no choice but to trudge the road you took—no shortcuts, no U-turns.

Moved by my craving for revenge and the credit card bills piled on my desk, I decided to conquer fear. It had stolen two years of my life already. And although I had no regrets taking that road, I vowed to make this humbling experience the best thing that ever happened to me.

So far, it has been that. One of my first post-retrenchment afternoons was spent at a Starbucks table in the company of a good book and my trustworthy Palm Pilot. From inside the cool coffee shop, amid the businessmen's coffee-break banter, everything was perfect. It was the kind of day that reminded me of high school dismissal, the kind of day that used to make me sorry I was inside the office. The sun smiled as the leaves of the tree nearby danced in the soft, cool breeze. I heard the faint shouts of glee of the children playing across the street. I sipped my hot Refresh tea and instantly felt my muscles relax. Ahh, the simple joys we miss as we work our way to the top of the corporate ladder.

The time after being retrenched, I realized, is the best for taking stock of your life, rediscovering your passion, and beginning anew. After all, you got a consolation prize called severance pay to pay for that ballooning cellphone bills in the next few months. Retrenchment taught me to abandon the rat race. It made me realize that a fat paycheck never justifies doing a job I hate. It taught me to trust. It opened my eyes to the many opportunities that await me. A new job. A new field. My own business, maybe. My heart raced with excitement.

Despite the recurring fear about my finances running low, I can't help but smile. I was given a chance to take a new path and search for my personal legend. That, after all, is what life is all about: the discovery and pursuit of one's meaning and purpose.

Retrenchment is a reality many people can't escape. It is devastating, but it isn't all that bad either. As in everything, it is just a matter of attitude. I spent two years following the road that led to nowhere. What's another month or two spent in post-retrenchment bliss and making sure that this time I will choose the right path?

R.K.R., 24, does freelance web programming work. She asked to be allowed to used her initials so she won't get into trouble with her past employer.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO . . .?

Libel case vs running priest

FR. Robert Reyes of the Parish of the Holy Sacrifice in UP Diliman, who is also known as the running priest, was charged with libel before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court in May 2002.

The case stemmed from a complaint lodged by Cagayan Rep. Jackie Enrile in October 2001. Enrile accused Reyes and TV host Paolo Bediones of libel when the priest accused him and his father, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, of murdering the priest's nephew, Ernest Robert Lucas. Reyes allegedly said in an interview on Bediones' TV show, "*Kapag nakita ko si Juan Ponce Enrile at si Jackie Enrile* ,I'd say you murdered my nephew and no justice was done."

Charges against the TV host were dropped. The prosecutor who conducted the preliminary investigation said Bediones "merely acted as an introductory narrator." Reyes' statement, however, was deemed libelous.

Lucas was in his late teens when he was shot dead as he was fetching his sister who attended a party of St. Scholastica and Ateneo de Manila University students in a house in San Lorenzo Village, Makati, on Sept. 21, 1975. "All the people involved, including all eyewitnesses, just evaporated. I'd really want to know who's behind it," Reyes said.

The libel case was assigned to Judge Normandie Pizarro of Branch 100.

Reyes was arrested and detained at the Quezon City Jail on May 27 but was later set free after paying a P10,000 bail. The bond was donated by his parishioners.

The arraignment set on June 19 was postponed after Pizarro granted the defense's motion for a deferment in view of the petition for review filed by Reyes before the Department of Justice on June 13.

Case status: The DOJ has yet to resolve Reyes' petition for review. The arraignment set on Aug. 21 was reset to Oct. 24.

Armin Adina, PDI Research Department

Who's to blame for Sabah fiasco?

MUCH as I am angered by the brutal and inhuman way Malaysia has dealt with our Filipino deportees, I cannot help but think that part of the blame should be laid at the doorstep of the Macapagal administration.

It must be recalled that Malaysia had given a four-month deadline for illegal aliens and undocumented persons to return to their country and have their papers updated. Four months are more than enough time for us to take action. But what did our government do? It took its own sweet time until the deadline came, and by then it was too late: Malaysia's harsh laws had taken effect.

So before we begin making a lot of noise and delivering inflammatory speeches, why don't we look at ourselves and admit that we are partly to blame.

I hope this tragic incident serves as a wake up call for the President and all her advisers as well as the nincompoops who form a cordon sanitaire around Ms Macapagal-Arroyo, who promised a transparent governance and a sincere administration.

—REV. SALVADOR D. EDUARTE,
Luna Colleges,
Tayug, Pangasinan

Roco posters an unnecessary expense

FORMER Education Secretary Raul S. Roco is again deceiving the public when he stated at a press conference that his posters were a budgeted item and approved by the Commission on Audit (COA). The record shows no other education secretary ever printed posters of themselves out of *delicadeza*, and there is no particular line item budget for this purpose in the budget of the department. Roco charged the 350,000 posters worth P1,144,500.00 to the maintenance and other operating expenses of the Department of Education.

Roco was lying when he said that the transaction was approved by the COA. The agency does not pre-approve expenditures because their primary function is post audit. In fact, in a COA Audit Observation Memorandum dated Nov. 5, 2001, the department auditor Flerida A. Jimenez stated that the printing of 350,000 posters was an unnecessary expenditure, defined in COA Circular 85-55-A dated Sept. 8, 1985 as pertaining to "expenditures which could not pass the test of prudence or the diligence of a good father of a family, thereby denoting non-responsiveness to the exigencies of the service."

The COA report said: "We believe that these posters have no connection to the recognized objectives of the DepEd nor are they for the support of the government or the promotion of public welfare, and that the expenditures can be dispensed with without loss or damage to property."

—NESTOR QUILOP, budget division,
Department of Education,
DepEd Complex, Meralco Avenue,
Pasig City

PAF seeking jets not only from Taiwan

YOUR article of Sept. 16, 2002, entitled "No scalawag generals in AFP—Defensor" and written by Martin Marfil, mentioned that among the first acts of the new AFP chief of staff was "to purchase fighter jets from Taiwan." He was also quoted as saying "the Philippines is also looking for surplus F-5E jets from other countries."

In behalf of Gen. Benjamin P. Defensor, we would like to clarify that during his meeting with the members of the Defense Press Corps last Sept. 18, 2002 in Camp Aguinaldo, he did not say the Armed Forces of the Philippines was seeking Taiwan jets for an interim fighter fleet. His exact words were: "We are not looking at Taiwan. We are looking all over the world for fighters that could complement, or maybe act as an interim fighter fleet until we get the modern fighters." He explained that the planned purchase of F-5s is "actually an interim measure because the Air Force has a multi-role fighter acquisition program." He reiterated that those fighters "could come from anywhere in the world." There was no mention of any interest in the surplus F-5E jets from Taiwan to form the core of the Philippine Air Force's interim fighter fleet.

We would like to assure you and your readers that while he is in office, the chief of staff will do everything in his capacity to enforce his "one force, one fight, one future" command philosophy. In relation to this, he flew to Zamboanga and Jolo over the weekend to personally assess the ongoing operations against the bandits holding four Filipino and three Indonesian hostages.

—LT. COL. DANILO M. SERVANDO,
chief, public information office,
Department of National Defense,
General Headquarters,
Armed Forces of the Philippines,
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo,
Quezon City

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The dinosaur

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE SHORTEST short story ever written—in Spanish at least—reads: "*Cuando desperto, el dinosaurio todavia estaba alli,*" which translates to an intriguing, "Upon waking, the dinosaur was still there."

That short story won its author, Augusto Monterroso, the Premio Cervantes in 2000, the most prestigious award for literature in Spanish, its one line resonating throughout Latin America because it was actually a political tract. Monterroso used a dinosaur to refer to the Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI) which had been in power in Mexico for 71 years.

With political parties sprouting and wilting in the Philippines like mushrooms, we don't have an equivalent of a PRI, but we certainly find ourselves waking up to dinosaurs that won't go away or rather that stay because we want them to.

I wanted to relate this dinosaur story to the 30th anniversary of Marcos' declaration of martial law, observed last Saturday. I worry that each time Sept. 21 rolls around, we have the usual rituals of remembering the human rights violations under Marcos, and the extravagance of the conjugal dictatorship. All that is important, but if we want to be sure about our slogan, "Never again," then we need to go beyond the memories of the Marcos era and look at the conditions that led to the imposition and acceptance of martial law.

Note that memories of the horrors of martial law often become a counterpoint to what we presume to be a golden pre-Marcos era of a vibrant economy and a flourishing democracy. Supposedly politicians were a nobler lot then, corruption was minor and people were generally good, kind and gentle.

That nostalgia for that golden era is built on myths. For example, we often read that the Philippines was one of the most developed countries in the region after World War II, but we forget that our "affluence" came because we received $620 million in US rehabilitation assistance, a huge amount at that time.

While Japan and neighboring countries struggled along with austerity, building up their economies, a joint Philippine-American finance commission looking at how we had used rehabilitation assistance noted how our oligarchs were squandering away the assistance with their "conspicuous consumption of luxuries and non-essentials." This pattern was to worsen through the 1950s and 1960s, the elite partying as the nation slid into squalor, chaos and despair.

Today we cling on to myths of a political paradise, a nation governed by good leaders and a law-abiding populace. In reality, what we had was not a disciplined, but a subjugated population. They complied only because they were fearful of those in power.

We forget that many of the political dynasties we have today were established long before Marcos, wielding power through their private armies. Whenever there was a local problem, the solution was to silence the opposition. Other social institutions, particularly those of the Roman Catholic Church, colluded to maintain this set-up. Throughout our history then, before, during and after Marcos, the state has been there, up for grabs by politicians out to concentrate their power and to create more wealth for themselves through graft and corruption.

In the 1970s, as a university student working out in rural areas, I was horrified by the stories peasants told me, of generations upon generations of relatives and neighbors beaten up or killed for the mildest infractions against landlords and officials. In most cases, the peasants suffered in silence, unable to fight back because there were few channels through which they could air their grievances.

Discontent simmered, only to boil over into armed insurrections, many of which were easily crushed. Some rebellions, such as that of Huks, were more formidable, but they were finally put down by Ramon Magsaysay with US help. Corruption and economic exploitation worsened in the 1960s, brought to new heights when Marcos raided the national treasury to get himself reelected in 1969. The nation was in shambles, and there was widespread discontent with massive street demonstrations in cities and armed struggle led by the New People's Army in the countryside.

Marcos offered to save the nation from the oligarchs and the communists, a so-called revolution from the center. The nation jumped at the bait. As Conrado de Quiros wrote in his book "Dead Aim," an excerpt of which appeared last Tuesday in his column, Imelda Marcos was said to have exulted at how easy it was to declare martial law.

It was indeed easy. With authoritarian values in our homes, in religious affairs, in local politics, we wanted to believe the solutions to our national problems would come with tougher laws, tougher penalties, tougher leaders.

Today, we see a nostalgia based on a new set of myths, this time around martial law. I hear people arguing that the only hope left for Filipinos is martial law or an authoritarian leader, that Marcos would have made it worked if it hadn't been for "her." But read De Quiros' book and you will get glimpses into the mind of a power-hungry politician who plotted his way to martial law, getting what he wanted because in a sense, we wanted him to. We wanted to be disciplined by a strongman (or, now, a strongwoman) rather than to discipline ourselves in freedom.

The dinosaur is still with us, and growing.

* * *

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

A period of musical geniuses

I READ with interest "As time goes by, play it again, Sam" by Gerry Lirio. (PDI, 9/8/02) It was a refreshing front-page story different from the many depressing accounts that have become daily newspaper fare. It reported that Camp John Hay employees discovered a cache of old records whose sleeves had turned yellowish but which remained playable. Camp John Hay's vice president and her staff dusted off some of the albums and played it on the turntable. They "slowly realized (they had) stumbled on a treasure trove."

Indeed, a record is something cherished that transports one to the music, the songs and the great voices of a bygone era. Having been born in that era when good music prevailed, I am inclined to say that the 1930s up to the 1960s, were decades of musical geniuses and talents unbeatable in showcasing musicality and romanticism. Unforgettable songs and compositions featured in movies and plays of those years are now considered standards. We can name the titles of movies and the featured song that went with them and vice versa. The movie "Casablanca" and the oft-repeated line, "Play it, Sam" (I prefer "Here's looking at you, kid!"), are well known simply because of the song "As times goes by."

Thank you, America, for the records left behind though they only remind of us of how much more good music there was. I know. I fortunately have my own treasure trove.

—FRANCISCO S. SERRANO,
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Israel stops destruction, but Palestinians defiant

RAMALLAH, West Bank—Israel halted its demolition of Yasser Arafat's headquarters—reportedly under intense US pressure—but maintained a siege around the last remaining building Monday and said it would not withdraw until dozens of Palestinian security officials holed up inside surrender.

With the blockade now in its fifth day, Palestinian protests and international criticism intensified.

Palestinians observed a commercial strike Monday in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Palestinian leaders appealed to the Arab world for help.

The United Nations Security Council was to convene Monday to discuss the operation. European and Arab states demanded flatly that Israel end its siege.

The US ambassador to Israel, Dan Kurtzer, met with Ariel Sharon at the prime minister's sheep farm over the weekend. Kurtzer told Sharon the assault on Arafat's compound was disrupting preparations for a possible attack on Iraq and was liable to disrupt internal reforms in the Palestinian Authority, media reports said.

Publicly, the United States said the Israeli operation was not helpful to efforts to fight terrorism.

Israel's Cabinet secretary, Gideon Saar, said the United States "understands Israel's right to self-defense . . . On the other hand, they have concerns and this is natural."

Arafat aid Nabil Abu Rdeneh, speaking by telephone, said the Security Council must act. "This is a dangerous and unacceptable situation," he said.

Israeli military bulldozers pulled out of the city-block-sized compound after nightfall Sunday, the Army said.

But witnesses said early Monday that one bulldozer could be seen moving wrecked cars and rubble around at the compound. Arafat's office, where he and his aids are confined to four rooms, is the only building still intact and is surrounded by three layers of barbed wire and partially by a trench.

Water and electricity in the office building were cut for several hours Sunday. Palestinians interpreted this as pressure on Arafat, who continued to resist Israeli demands to hand over the people in his office. The Israeli military said the lines were cut by accident as huge bulldozers leveled structures there. Later the lines were repaired, the military said.

In a statement, the Palestinian parliament called on Palestinians to "show their willingness to resist this escalation," warning that Israel's operation might lead to a regional explosion and blaming both Israel and the United States. "The American administration bears responsibility of blood of our people and of our leadership," the statement said, because the US government backs Israel.

Near Arafat's compound, a few hundred Palestinians demonstrated Sunday against the curfew imposed by the Israeli Army on Ramallah and four other Palestinian towns. As soldiers using loudspeakers ordered them off the streets, the demonstrators chanted back, "No more curfew!"

Earlier Sunday, four Palestinians were killed during confrontations between demonstrators and soldiers. A fifth, a 13-year-old boy, died in disputed circumstances.

In Gaza City, thousands marched in front of the Palestinian parliament building. Holding an automatic rifle, Abu Mohammed, a member of the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades militia, linked to Arafat's Fatah, said, "It is time for all Palestinians to teach the Israelis a lesson and defend Arafat." *AP*

THE SUN rises over Arafat's compound in Ramallah on Sept. 23.
REUTERS

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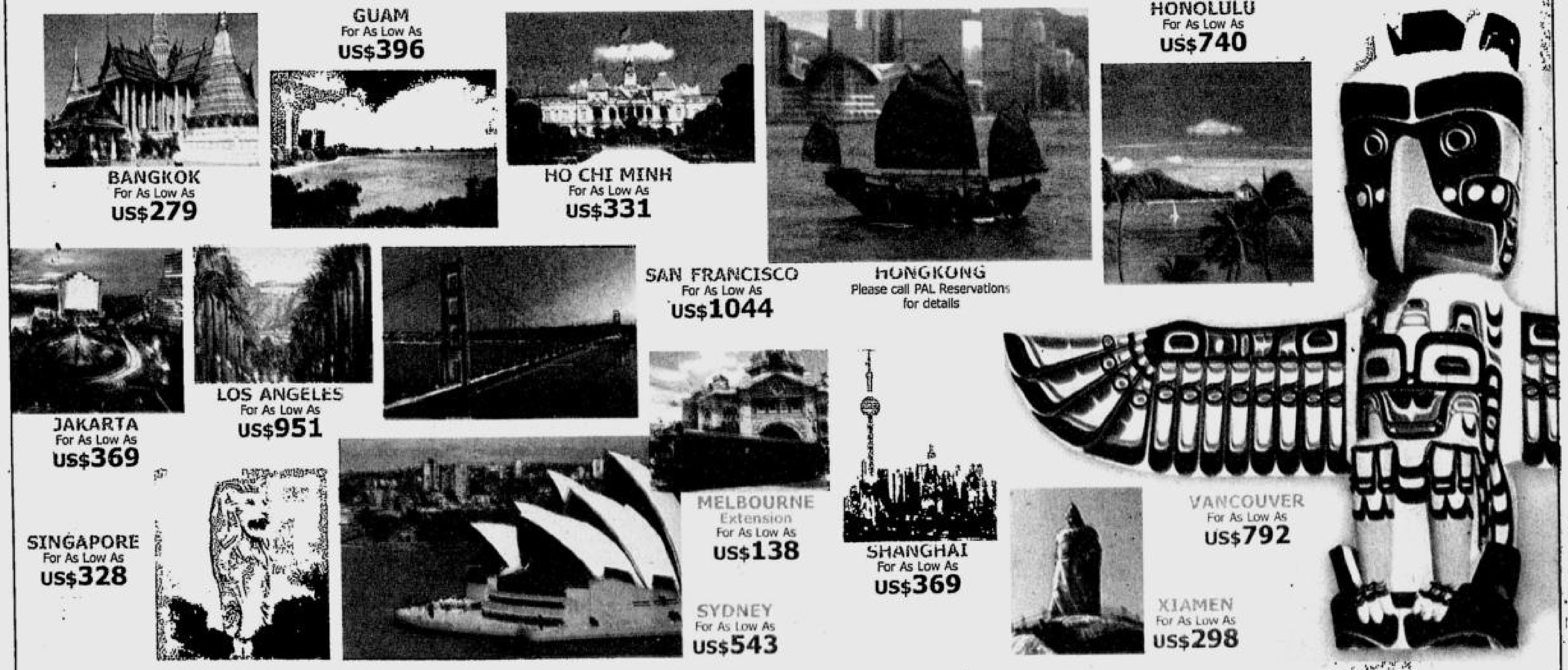

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Blast kills man in Jakarta near US Embassy

JAKARTA—A hand grenade exploded and killed one man in a car Monday near a house belonging to the US Embassy, police said. The embassy denied that any of its properties were targeted.

The pre-dawn explosion occurred inside a car carrying four men in a residential neighborhood of central Jakarta. One person was killed, the driver was detained and two passengers got away, police and witnesses said.

National police chief Da'i Bachtiar initially told reporters the men were on their way to attack the embassy-owned building. But at a press conference later he called the explosion near the US-owned residence "coincidental."

When asked whether it was an attack against US interests, Bachtiar replied: "We don't know. We are investigating."

He said that the arrest of one suspect led police to the city of Bogor, 60 km south of Jakarta, where more weapons and explosives were found during raids on two homes.

The cache included TNT and 100 bullets, Bachtiar said. In Bogor, police also searched the home of Ahmad Azis, the man killed in the blast, and picked up his wife for questioning, said city police chief Col. Edmon Ilyas.

An embassy statement released Monday said: "The US Embassy is in direct contact with the Indonesian national police and at this time there are no indications that US Embassy properties or US interests were targeted."

The embassy, which remained open Monday, confirmed that it owned several properties in the area where the explosion occurred.

It had been closed on Sept. 10 for six days due to what US Ambassador Ralph Boyce called a "credible and specific threat" that he suggested was linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network.

Though now reopened, the embassy has cautioned US citizens to stay away. A concrete barricade erected last week runs the length of the complex as a deterrent against bomb attacks.

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim country. The government has been cooperating with the US-led war on terror and has come under fire from some radical groups that accuse it of being too close to Washington.

After Monday's explosion, survivors in the car tried to flee the scene but neighborhood residents ran after them, capturing the slightly injured driver and holding him until police arrived, police and witnesses said.

The explosion took place about 3:30 a.m. (2030 GMT Sunday) in a residential area just meters away from a home belonging to the US Embassy, said city police chief Col. Edmon Ilyas.

Police were interrogating the driver Monday and were trying to establish a motive. The two other passengers in the car got away, Ilyas said. *AP*

Rangoon releases 18 detainees

BANGKOK—Burma's military government said Monday it freed 18 political prisoners, including 10 members of the opposition National League for Democracy party, the latest group of dissidents released since the start of national reconciliation talks two years ago.

A government statement said authorities "will continue to release more individuals who will cause no harm to the community nor threaten the existing peace, stability and unity of the nation."

The junta is believed to hold up to 1,500 political prisoners, including several hundred members of opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, which won a 1990 general election but was not allowed to take power.

Instead of convening parliament, the military cracked down, harassing and arresting many members of the opposition.

The statement said five of those freed were women, four of them NLD members. The detainees were released from various correctional facilities, and "all are in good health and reunited with their respective families," it said.

The release of political prisoners has been a major demand of the National League for Democracy. Suu Kyi, a 1991 Nobel peace laureate, has been holding political reconciliation talks with the government since October 2000.

More than 300 of her party's members have been freed since the closed-door talks began, but apart from those prisoner releases, little else has resulted from the reconciliation talks.

The release of the 18 detainees was timed to coincide with the United Nations General Assembly in New York which Burma's Foreign Minister Win Aung is attending.

Prisoner releases are typically linked to important events or high-level visits to Rangoon. The last batch of eight dissidents was allowed out of jail earlier this month before the arrival of a European Union mission to Burma.

In a statement marking the junta's 14th anniversary, the United States last week accused Rangoon of failing to press forward with its promised national reconciliation drive. *AP and AFP*

GERMAN Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder addresses supporters in Berlin after a cliffhanger parliamentary election. AP

Schroeder's Social Democrats win 2nd term

BERLIN—Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats held onto power in Germany's closest postwar election, but the chancellor will face a tougher opposition at home and the task of rebuilding ties with the United States after a campaign that angered Washington.

Schroeder secured another four years for his coalition with the small Greens party in Sunday's vote, handing Europe's dwindling left another boost a week after Social Democrats triumphed in Sweden.

But he will have to tackle problems such as chronic unemployment and slow economic growth and confront strains in the country's generous welfare state with a slender majority that opponents said will not hold.

Official results released early Monday showed the Social Democrats and Greens won a combined 47.1 percent of the vote for the lower house, or Bundestag. Opposition parties led by resurgent conservatives under Edmund Stoiber totaled 45.9 percent.

That gave the Social Democrats and Greens 306 seats in the new 603-seat parliament, compared to 295 for conservatives and the pro-business Free Democrats. Reformed communists won the other two seats.

A jubilant Schroeder appeared arm-in-arm with Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer of the Greens before cheering supporters in Berlin.

"We have hard times in front of us and we're going to make it together," Schroeder shouted.

The Greens were exuberant after their best showing in their 22-year history—8.6 percent. But Fischer declined to say whether the Greens would demand another ministerial position.

"One must be modest in victory," he said.

Chastened by his narrow defeat, conservative challenger Stoiber said Schroeder would face a reinvigorated opposition and forecast that his power base would prove brittle.

"I predict that this Schroeder government will rule for only a very short time," Stoiber said.

Schroeder's coalition has a nine-seat majority in the new parliament, down from a 21-vote advantage in his first term. The winning margin is tighter than in 1976, previously the closest race, when a Social Democrat-led government won a 10-seat majority.

Schroeder's outspoken opposition to a military conflict with Iraq was credited with giving him a late push in a tight campaign. But it sparked a rare open spat with the United States and accusations he whipped up emotions against a vital ally for electoral gain.

"What I criticize above all is that (Schroeder) opened the floodgates for anti-American tones," Stoiber said on German television, calling the crisis with the United States "the most devastating of the last 50 years."

Analysts expect Schroeder to adopt a softer tone after the election, but he showed no intention Monday of backing down. He has insisted he would not commit troops for a war even if the United Nations backs military action.

"I have formulated a German position, and I have nothing to retract on that count," Schroeder told German television.

The rhetoric reached a damaging peak in the final days of his campaign when Justice Minister Herta Daeubler-Gmelin was reported to have compared President George W. Bush to Hitler for threatening war to distract from domestic problems. She denied saying it.

The Social Democrats said she would not have a post in a new government, although she will be in parliament. *AP*

Belgium approves euthanasia

BRUSSELS—Belgium on Monday became only the second country in the world to allow mercy killings if patients request doctors' help to end the agony of terminal illnesses.

With a new euthanasia law officially entering into force, Belgium joined its neighbor the Netherlands, which had so far been the only other country to have the controversial legislation on the books.

Socialist Sen. Philippe Mahoux, who helped draft the new law, has hailed it as a recognition that a dying person in pain can be "the only judge of their quality of life and the dignity of their last moments."

The government adopted the final element of the new law at the end of last week, setting up a permanent committee to monitor mercy killings under the new regime.

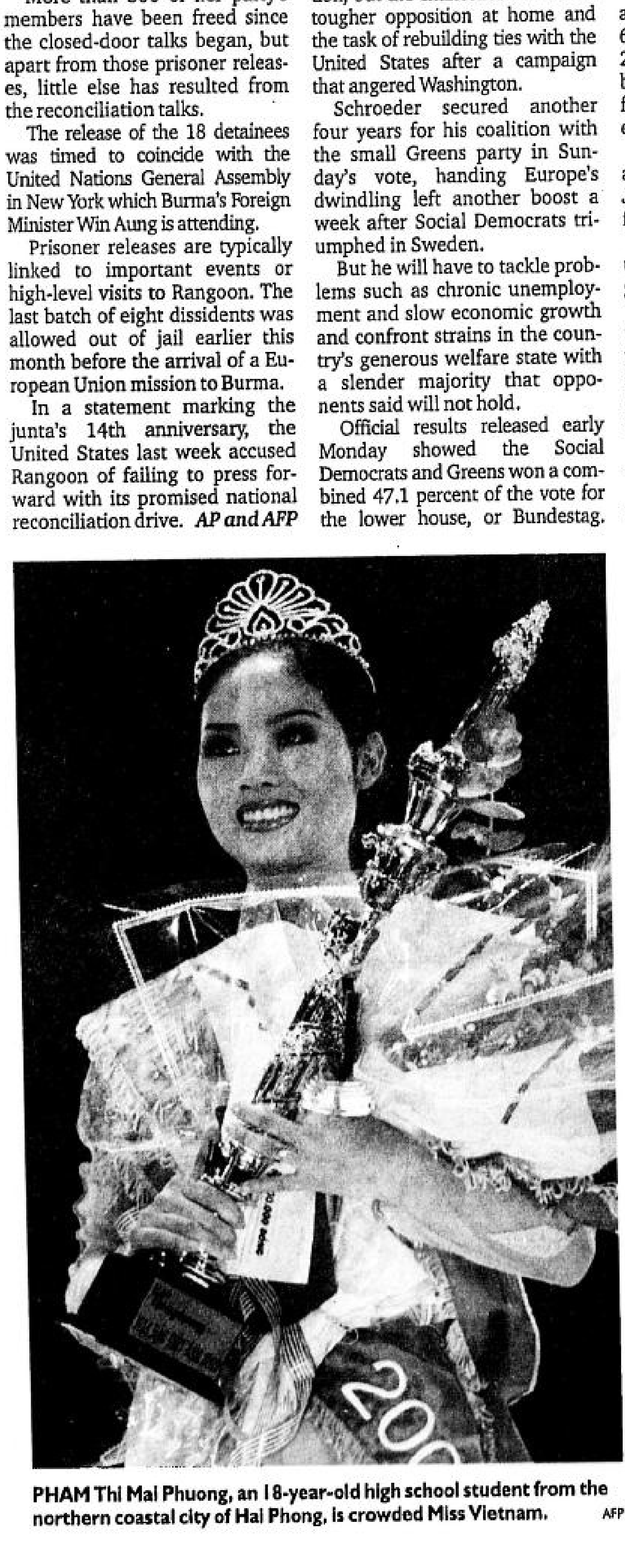
Liberal Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt said the committee would meet for the first time on Tuesday to approve the new official form doctors have to fill out every time they help a patient to die.

Under the law, a doctor who carries out a mercy killing will not be guilty of committing a crime if the patient is terminally ill and has made the decision themselves, and if certain other legal procedures have been followed.

The law was adopted by the Belgian parliament in May in a 86-51 vote that provoked outrage from the influential Roman Catholic clergy. Some 75 percent of Belgium's population of 10 million are Catholic.

Before carrying out a mercy killing under the new law, a doctor must be certain that the request to die has been made of the patient's own free will, is properly thought through and consistent and is not the result of external pressure.

To avoid prosecution, a doctor must also ensure that the patient "is in a terminal medical situation" and enduring "constant and unbearable physical or psychological pain" resulting from an accident or incurable illness. *AFP*



PHAM Thi Mai Phuong, an 18-year-old high school student from the northern coastal city of Hai Phong, is crowded Miss Vietnam. AFP

Beauty contest redefines Viet communism

HO CHI MINH CITY—Beauty pageants and communism may seem unlikely bed fellows, but when Ho Chi Minh City hosted the inaugural Miss Vietnam competition it put on a show worthy of its former nemesis, the United States.

More than 4,000 people squeezed into the southern commercial capital's Phan Dinh Phung Cultural Palace on Sunday night to witness an all-singing, all-dancing, kitsch extravaganza.

After several regional rounds and two days of semi-finals, 22 women were left from some 2,000 entrants, all hoping to be crowned Miss Vietnam and handed the keys to stardom and bulging dollar accounts.

If any proof were needed of what sort of career opportunities the title carried, beauty queen-turned-movie star Ha Kieu Anh was on hand to sing the audience into a frenzy with her suggestive hip gyrations.

Ten years ago, Anh was crowned Miss Tien Phong, taking the name of the state-run "Pioneer" newspaper that launched the concept of beauty contests in Vietnam in 1988, as the country slowly began embracing market reforms.

Unofficially sanctioned by the communist authorities, yet frowned upon by some northern ideologues within Hanoi's staid ministries, it continued on a biennial basis, growing in stature hand-in-hand with Ho Chi Minh City's entrepreneurial instincts.

This year it was officially recognized as a cultural event and granted permission by the Ministry of Culture and Information—sometimes disparagingly dubbed the immorality and censorship ministry—to call itself the "Miss Vietnam" pageant.

What's more, thanks to the sponsorship of a large Anglo-Dutch multinational and revenue from television rights, this year's beauty queen and her successors are set to represent Vietnam in future Miss World contests.

"Previously people protested the competition saying it was not the sort of thing that Vietnam should do, but now it has more supporters than detractors," said Duong Xuan Nam, managing director of Tien Phong.

"The government now recognizes it as a healthy cultural activity. It glorifies the beauty of Vietnamese girls and enables us to choose the most beautiful of them to represent our country in international competitions." Naturally then, the show's capitalist trappings were laced with unsubtle references to the country's past glories taken straight from the Communist Party's propaganda hymn sheet.

In the end, the panel of five judges opted for 18-year-old school girl Pham Thi Mai Phuong from the northern port city of Haiphong, who was introduced on stage as wanting "to bring her knowledge to the people in the far and remote areas of the country." Her idealism contrasted heavily with the other aspiring beauty queens whose less noble ambitions included becoming lawyers, accountants, air hostesses and entrepreneurs.

But despite the inevitable political undertones, the organizers proved Vietnam can compete with the very best that the United States has to offer when it comes to putting on cringe-worthy spectacles. *AFP*

Australian nuns deny sex abuse of orphans

BRISBANE, Australia—A senior Catholic nun accused of abusing children in an orphanage here during the 1940s and 1950s has been told she has no case to answer, her order said Monday.

However, the Sisters of Nazareth order said it was making ex-gratia payments worth more than A$1 million (US$550,000) to some of the alleged victims and apologized to them.

"It is a matter of great regret that in the course of Nazareth House's long history, there were some things done that should not have been done and some actions that have caused pain and unhappiness," the nuns said.

Sister Bernard Mary and other nuns who served at Nazareth House, operated by the Sisters of Nazareth in Brisbane half-a-century ago, have been accused of sexually and physically abusing girls at the orphanage.

The victims allege they were raped by nuns and priests and forced to eat feces, vomit and rotting fish while under their care at the orphanage in the Brisbane suburb of Wynnum.

Two women, Lizzie Walsh and Bobbie Ford, repeated the allegations on Channel Nine's "60 Minutes" program on Sunday night.

Similar allegations have been made against nuns belonging to the same order in New Zealand and in Scotland where they were upheld by a court. *AFP*

Across the NATION

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Mining in Surigao village suspended

BUTUAN CITY—Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez said on Thursday here that he ordered an "open-ended" moratorium on the exploration activity of the Manila Mining Corp. (MMC) in Barangay Anislagan in Placer, Surigao del Norte following strong resistance from residents.

ALVAREZ

Alvarez's order came in the wake of a similar act by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau aimed at easing the tension in the village.

MMC's exploration activities in Anislagan were being undertaken by Diamond Drilling Corp., its sister company. Manila-based Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. owns both firms.

Director Alilo Ensomo of the MGB-Caraga said MGB director Horacio Ramos already told MMC management about the decision.

Ensomo said MGB has also sent a team "to validate resolutions" submitted by villagers before the environment body.

"After the validation, a dialogue will be conducted with both parties. The dialogue will be handled by local government officials with MGB," Ensomo said.

Violence erupted in the village on September 7 after around 70 DDCP workers, accompanied by company security guards, forced their way into the barricade of protesting residents at around 2 a.m.

Barangay Captain Estela Udtojan complained that company vehicles tried to run over the protesters, causing panic that nearly injured several people.

The barricade that started on July 17 was set up by the residents to oppose MMC's exploration activities in the village.

However, in a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, DDCP said it was the protesters who have been harassing their employees.

Gary Ferguson, DDCP vice-president, said the protesters, led by Msgr. Priscillo Iral of the Social Action Center of the Diocese of Surigao del Norte and Fr. Ricardo Virtudazo, the former parish priest of Anislagan, were armed with "bolos, air guns and other concealed weapons."

". . . the group of Iral and Virtudazo. . . cordoned off the only road leading to the site and prevented the workers from leaving the place. They also prevented supplies, especially food and water, from reaching the exploration crew," Ferguson said in the statement.

Glenn Batilando, environment manager of Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co., DDCP's mother company, said the most serious incident was the stabbing of one of their security guards by at least two protesters on September 10.

Batilando said Rolando Mendoza was taking a bath in a river when Arnulfo Dapar and Mario Tejada, a village official, attacked him.

"Without any provocation, Dapar stabbed Mendoza in the stomach but the thrust was parried by the latter, wounding his hand. Outnumbered, Mendoza tried to run but was hacked in the legs by Tejada. It was only when Mendoza was able to draw his service firearm and fired a warning shot that the attackers fled," Batilando said in a statement.

DDCP vowed to sue Mendoza's attackers.

But Anislagan residents denied the charge.

"He was only shooed away. He was never harmed. They were really trying to bring us down by concocting events. This stabbing incident only occurred in the minds of DDCP officials," a resident said.

Udtojan also denied they were armed and that they manhandled DDCP workers. She accused DDCP of intimidating the villagers by brandishing their guns.

Surprisingly, Alvarez even praised the villagers for defending their rights.

He said unless MMC resolves the issues raised against it by residents of Anislagan, the moratorium will continue to be in effect. *Franklin A. Caliguid and Ma. Kristina E. Cassion, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

> 'Unless MMC resolves the issues raised against it by residents, the moratorium will continue to be in effect'

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Protesters question reappointment of UP Visayas chancellor by board

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—Protests have broken out in the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) over the reappointment of Chancellor Ida Siason by the UP Board of Regents (BOR).

Streamers questioning her appointment have appeared in the UPV's main campus in Miag-ao, Iloilo, 40.4 kilometers south of here and also in the Iloilo City campus side by side with those announcing her reappointment.

Last Friday around 200 students, teachers and non-teaching personnel wore black shirts as they held a rally inside the UPV's Iloilo City campus, questioning the decision of the 13-member BOR, the university's highest policy-making body.

The UPV, one of seven autonomous units of the UP System, has around 6,500 students in campuses in Miag-ao town and in the cities of Iloilo, Cebu and Tacloban.

The BOR on its 1,163rd meeting held on Sept. 12 chose Siason over two other nominees, Adolfo De Guzman and Amador Muriel.

Siason, who will serve another three-year term, was Vice Chancellor for UPV Academic Affairs from 1993 to 1999.

Lynn Alobba, a faculty member of the UP High School Department, said the protest actions were a forum to "search for the truth."

They questioned why the incumbent chancellor was re-appointed when she did not have the mandate of UPV constituents, she said.

"The BOR must show that they have a very strong justification for her reappointment," said Alobba.

She said they also wanted to know about the report of the five-member search committee that conducted consultations with the various sectors in August.

Sonia Formacion, dean of the UP College of Arts and Sciences, said the protests were "an expression of disappointment over (Siason's) reappointment."

She described Siason's term as "more of housekeeping" rather than leadership.

Dean Evelyn Belleza of the College of Management said that under Siason's term, decision-making became too centralized and caused frustration and demoralization among the faculty and students.

Many of those opposed to Siason had batted for Muriel's appointment but clarified that the basic issue was a change of leadership.

But Siason said those protesting her reappointment belongs only to "a small group that does not represent the sentiments of the majority."

"They are entitled to their opinion but this (selection of chancellor) is not an election but an academic exercise," she told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

She denied criticisms that she was "out of touch" with the UPV's operations, saying she was a "hands-on" person.

"My achievements as Chancellor are a matter of record," she added. "The exercise is over, the BOR has spoken. I am willing to sit and talk with them to move forward."

But student groups in the Miag-ao and Iloilo City campuses said the controversy "is rooted in the undemocratic process in the selection of the Chancellor."

"It has been the stand of students not to support any of the candidates in the selection of the chancellor because the students, supposedly the biggest stakeholder in the University, are denied the right to directly participate in the selection of the highest official of UPV," said a statement of the UPV Students Forum, an alliance of student organizations.

While they said they were non-partisan, the reappointment of Siason could worsen their situation because the Chancellor "has been proven in her previous term as an avid implementor of anti-student policies whether system-wide or local."

They blamed Siason for implementing "stringent recognition process on student organizations," which they said "have practically put a stranglehold on student organizations especially those critical of undemocratic and anti-student policies."

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Puerto Princesa to elect mayor today

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—The people of Puerto Princesa City will decide today the fate of mayoralty candidates Victorino Dennis Socrates, Edward S. Hagedorn and Sandy Sandoval after the Supreme Court issued a 15-day temporary restraining order on the recall election originally set by the Commission on Elections last Sept. 7.

Two candidates made their last wave of campaigns on Sunday through a motorcade that clogged the main streets of the city.

Former city mayor Hagedorn's supporters trooped to the streets early in the morning while Socrates had his own late in the afternoon after which a grand rally was held in Mendoza park.

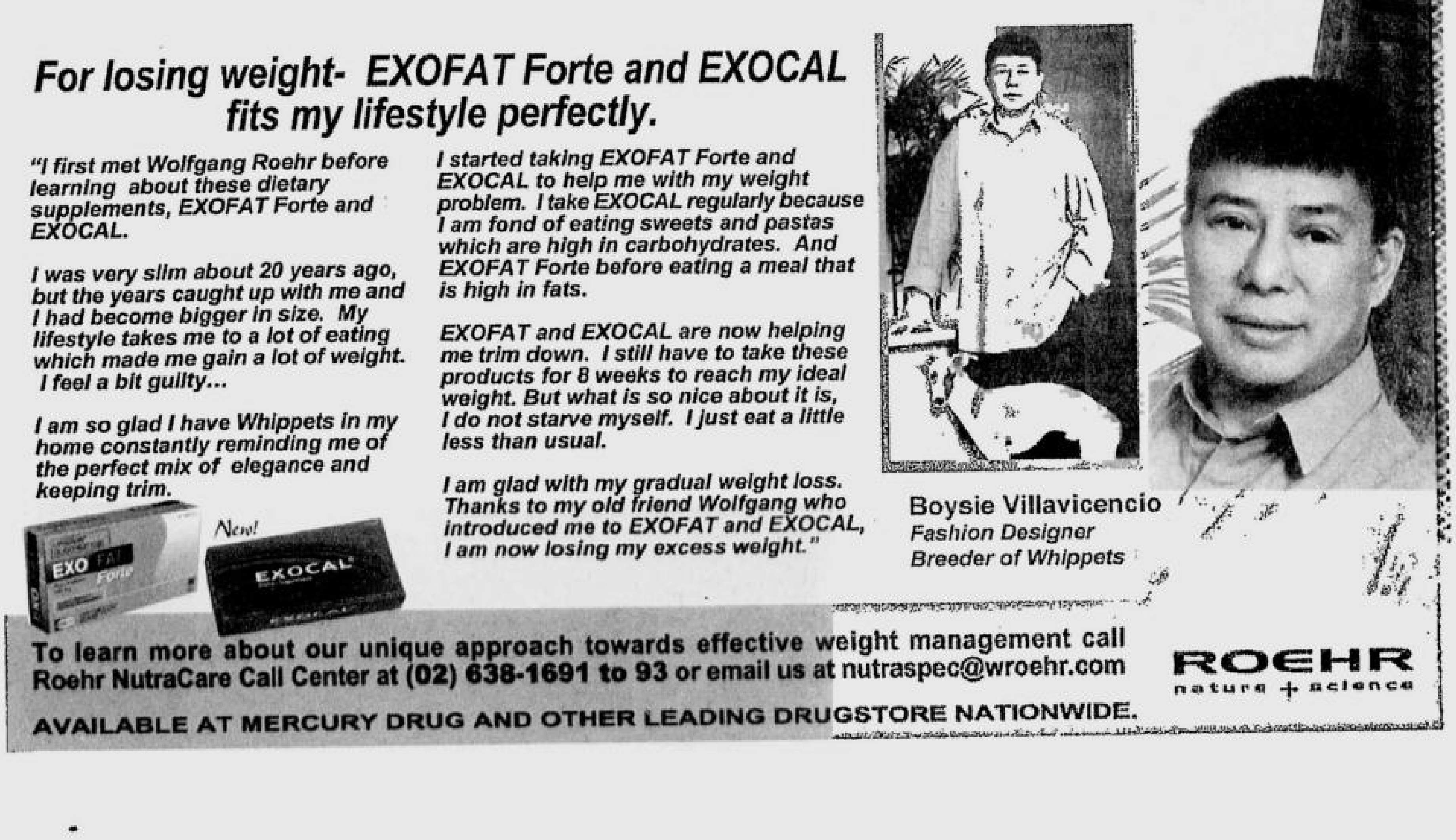
The third candidate, engineer Sandy Sandoval, however, remained silent and could not be reached for comment.

Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, who is in town to supervise the election, said that she is confident that there would be no untoward incident. "I believe that the people of Puerto Princesa are a people of law," she said. "But we are taking all the precautionary measures," she added

During a press conference on Sunday, Tancangco told the media here that the security had been beefed up to ensure the orderly and peaceful conduct of the election.

The Comelec granted the petition of city officer Ma. Buenconsejo Narrazid to inhibit herself from chairing the Board of Canvassers and designated Comelec Oriental Mindoro provincial supervisor Jocelyn Pastrado to chair the body.

The Comelec first division also dismissed the disqualification case filed against Hagedorn. *Geraldford Ticke, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



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JDV wants to integrate NPA into AFP–Satur

By Vincent Cabreza and Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Speaker Jose de Venecia is seeking the integration of the New People's Army into the Armed Forces of the Philippines, a "tried and tested formula" he wants to apply on the suspended peace talks between the government and communist rebels.

This was learned Thursday from Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo who said De Venecia made this suggestion when they teamed up for a joint resolution seeking the resumption of peace talks that were suspended in July by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The proposed House measure is one of many sectoral initiatives that seek the reopening of peace talks.

Eleven members of the National Council of Churches of the Philippines have each issued resolutions, which call on the Macapagal administration to immediately resume peace negotiations with the insurgents.

The NCCP actions were led by the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) Council of Bishops and by Supreme Bishop Tomas Millamena of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI or the Aglipay Church).

Millamena is drafting a position paper covering the peace talks, as a member of a third party observers' team that had supervised the talks since 1992, said IFI Rev. Emilie Dacuycuy.

Ocampo, who addressed the North Luzon Peace and Human Rights Summit here on Thursday, said the Speaker's sponsorship of any House measure guaranteed a House majority vote.

De Venecia had publicly endorsed the integration of a faction of the Cordillera People's Liberation Army into the military late last year, and had described this process as a peace commitment to the militia formed by slain rebel priest Conrado Balweg.

The CPLA breakaway faction, led by Abra Mayor Mailed Molina, had enrolled 168 militiamen for training at Camp Melchor de la Cruz in Isabela.

But Ocampo said De Venecia's version of the proposed House resolution for peace talks prompted him to instead "negotiate with the Speaker."

De Venecia was towing a Macapagal administration policy that seeks to compress four stages of peace negotiations into a single document, ignoring almost 10 years of talks, Ocampo said.

"The National Democratic Front already rejected that position. The four-point agenda of the talks (form part of the 1992 Hague Declaration) that was reached by both the NDF and the government peace panels," he said.

Ocampo's version calls for the resumption of talks "from the point where the negotiations were terminated." His proposed resolution also demands complete adherence to the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CAHRIHL), the first item in the talks which was approved by the NDF and deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Bishop Allan Ray Sarte, head of the UCCP-North Luzon jurisdiction, told the INQUIRER on Wednesday that the churches want Ms Macapagal to concentrate on the aborted peace negotiations and ignore alien influences that "slowly bring the Philippines to the brink of war."

"We decry what we perceive as US interference in our internal affairs. We are troubled by possible US violations of Philippine sovereignty, including increased US military presence and activity, and its threat to unilaterally take punitive actions against alleged Filipino terrorists," according to a UCCP pastoral letter that was read last weekend.

Sarte said the US State Department had identified the NDF as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO), which could affect Ms Macapagal's policy on peace talks.

Ms Macapagal has said the government would not negotiate with "terrorists."

"Our people are being led to the ways of war, (basing) not only (from) the impending US war against Iraq. We call upon our people to be vigilant. We have enjoined the National Democratic Front, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and (the Macapagal administration) to seek again the peace talks," Sarte said in a press conference here.

He also referred to a unity statement signed by 80 clergymen from the NCCP, Catholic Church and human rights advocates.

The statement urged Ms Macapagal and the NDF to return to the negotiating table because of the alarming rise in human rights violations that are traceable to the insurgency campaigns.

Karapatan, a human rights organization, documented 1,334 cases of human rights violations and 37,164 civil rights victims from Jan. 22, 2001 to July 15, 2002.

ROUNDUP

Barong fest in Lumban

LUMBAN, Laguna—Thousands of residents, employees, civic groups and tourists joined the street dancing and the parade of this town's best-embroidered piña barong items, latest artistically designed fashion wear and related products during the Barong Festival which kicked off here last Wednesday. Mayor Reynato Macalalag said the festival attests to the thriving barong industry in the town. "Lumban is one of the few towns that have kept the embroidery tradition alive. We have devoted our time, skill and effort in the development of this craft," Macalalag said. Lumban's embroidery has been recognized as one of the best in the world, he said. An embroidery and fashion show was featured in the town until Sunday.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Resolution junked

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Mines and Geosciences Bureau has nullified a resolution of Guinobatan, Albay that declared the mountains of Guinobatan as non-negotiable to limestone quarrying. DENR-MGB regional director Reynulfo Juan explained that the DENR issued a mineral production sharing agreement to Goodfound Cement Factory on certain portions of Guinobatan and Camalig after consultations and abiding by the procedures in the acquisition of mining rights. The cement factory also underwent an environmental impact assessment, he said.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Swine dispersal

LEGAZPI CITY—A least 700 poor families in Albay benefited from the swine dispersal project of the Provincial Agriculture and Veterinary Office here recently. Dr. Jose Losa, office head, said they have distributed 700 piglets in the upland barangays of Libon town. Losa said the swine dispersal project is a program of the Department of Agriculture and is part of the poverty alleviation program of Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

P1M for building

DAET, Camarines Norte—Bayan Muna party-list representative Crispin Beltran vowed to allocate P1 million for the construction of a multi-purpose building here that will house the municipal tourism, culture and arts offices and the Bayan Muna chapter here. He said his group and the government should join hands in providing basic services to the people especially the poor. He vowed to continue his crusade against the power purchase adjustment charges, oil price hikes, tuition increases and the like. Beltran was here on Sept. 16 to grace the groundbreaking ceremony of the new municipal building compound where the multipurpose building will be located.

Bing Abaño, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Where's the mansion?

DAET, Camarines Norte—The top official here challenged his detractors to locate his alleged P13-million mansion in Marikina City. He even offered to give P50,000 and a house to those who can attest that he truly has a mansion. Daet Mayor Tito Sarion said the reports coming from some radio broadcasters here are "fabricated" and aimed at destroying his administration and deter him from implementing his projects. He said the P50,000-reward would come from his own pocket.

Bing Abaño, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Ex-Cafgu cheats death

LEGAZPI CITY—A former militia here survived after eight bullets were pumped into different parts of his body allegedly by two New People's Army hitmen last Wednesday. Albay Police Director PSSupt. Pedro Tango identified the victim as Victorino Robles Sanone, 37, a member of the Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit. Tango said suspected NPA rebels barged inside a billiards shop and shot Sanone, who was then watching the games. Despite his multiple bullet wounds, Sanone managed to escape from his assailants and hid inside an adjacent house. The suspects who were in their early 20s fled on foot towards Barangay Tastas.

Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Alarm sounded on rising death among 'lumad'

DAVAO CITY—At least 20 *lumad* folk, mostly children, have died in Paquibato and Marilog Districts here because of various illnesses, a tribal leader said.

Roel Arthur Sali, Deputy Mayor for tribal people in Paquibato, said tribal leaders have reported that a large number of their constituents have been afflicted with malaria and diarrhea since August.

The conditions of some of the victims were so serious that many have died, he said.

But Dr. Salvador Estrera, assistant regional director of the Department of Health in Southern Mindanao, said a team sent to the city's hinterlands did not find any evidence that the diseases have reached epidemic proportions.

Estrera said the team headed by Dr. Mike Ababon conducted a survey in the villages.

"We acted immediately on the reported epidemic but our team did not find any," Estrera said.

But even with the findings, Estrera said the team gave medical assistance to the villagers.

Ali said it was possible that the medical team did not go to remote villages where most of the deaths were recorded. He said affected villagers wanted to be treated, but the distance of their homes from the nearest health centers has discouraged them.

Ali said affected villagers could not endure the more than 20-kilometer trek to seek treatment. "Some of them are just waiting for their time to come, since it's hard for them to get a medical help," he said. *Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Fire hits Tarlac market, school

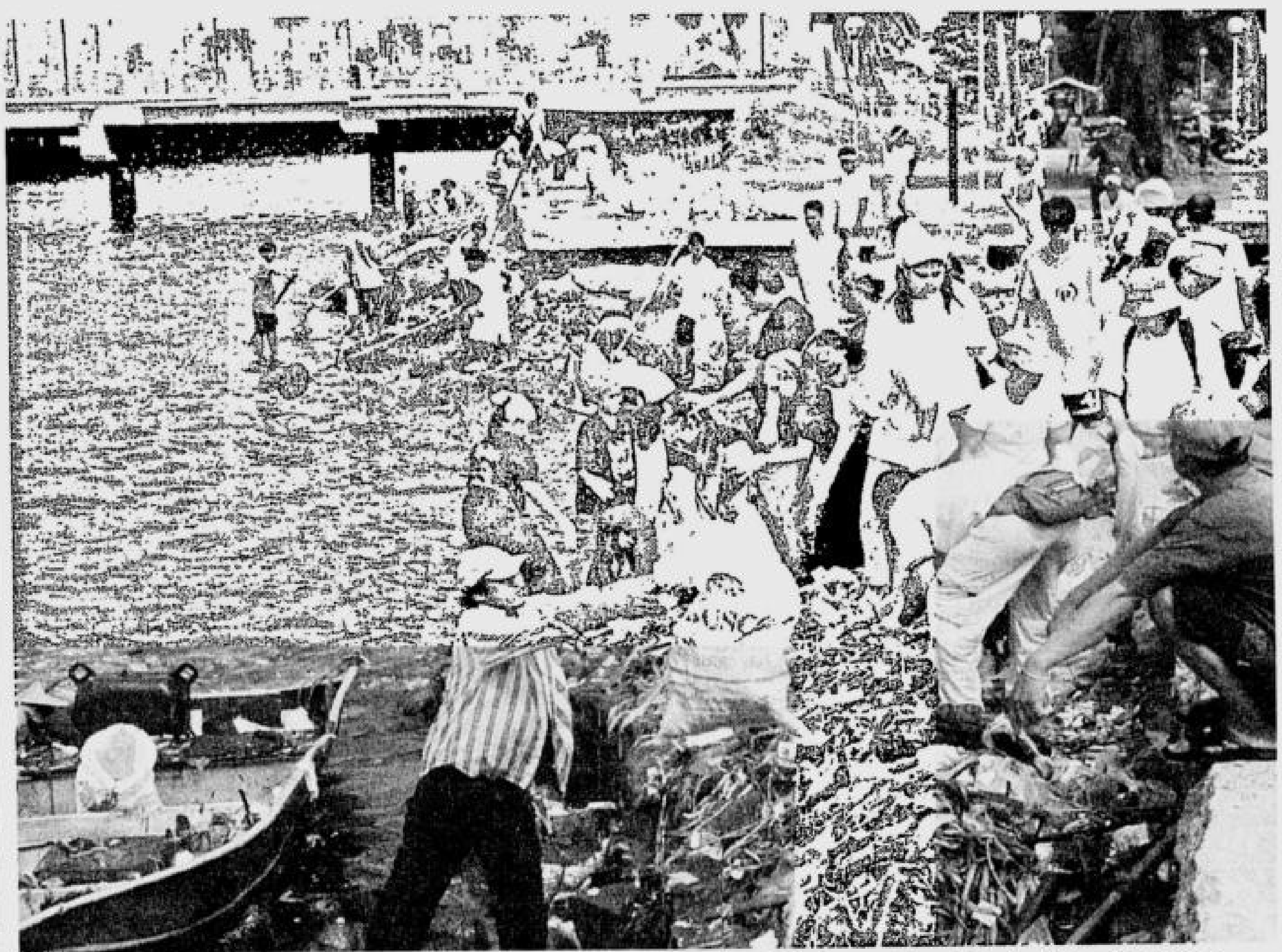
GERONA, Tarlac—At least P6-million worth of property were gutted by two separate fires that hit the public market and an elementary school here on Thursday.

Police said a fire broke out at the Bularit Elementary School here at 5 p.m. and destroyed six classrooms. Another fire burned a section of the Gerona public market at 9 p.m.

Mayor Harmes Sembrano asked the town council to declare a state of emergency in the town after the fires caused power outages and disrupted the town's communication system.

"We are urging the people of Gerona to join hands with the local government in helping the fire victims," Sembrano said.

About P5 million was lost in the public market fire while P1 million was lost in the Bularit Elementary School fire. Arson investigators said the fires were caused by faulty wiring. *Ronaldo Dizon, PDI Central Luzon Desk*



VOLUNTEERS pick up trash along the Quezon coastline in celebration of the International Coastal Clean-Up Day on Saturday.
DELFIN MALLARI JR.

Coastal clean-up volunteers disgusted over continuing pollution of Tayabas

LUCENA CITY—They never learned.

This was the finding and common comment of about 25,000 volunteer cleaners who swept the long Quezon coastline in celebration of the International Coastal Clean-Up Day on Saturday, referring to the people living along the shore.

"The continuous pollution of our coastline is brought (about) by the age-old practice of the residents. And no thousand coastal clean-up day would correct the malady unless they themselves see the need for change," Armando Rutaquio, Quezon Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer, told the INQUIRER.

Rutaquio described the coastal clean-up as an annual exercise in futility that would not serve its true purpose if the people residing along the coast continued to pollute the seashore.

Juliet Borlon, Quezon celebration coordinator, said about 25,000 volunteers, composed of students, government employees, civic groups, soldiers and the police—participated in the clean-up.

"We have coastal cleaners from as far as the coast of Ragay Gulf, Lamon Bay and Tayabas Bay areas," she said.

Like Rutaquio, Borlon also lamented the adamant indifference of the people.

She said she also felt sorry for the Iyam and Dumaca rivers in this city. "They stink and are heavily polluted with all kinds of trash. Even a daily river clean-up would not be enough."

After traversing the rivers with volunteers aboard eight motorboats, she said what was needed was "a strong resolve by the city government to strictly implement all the local ordinances that deal with the protection of the rivers," she said.

"What I found disgusting, was that even if we were already cleaning the river, there were people on both banks that still openly threw their wastes," Alcala said.

Rep. Rafael Nantes and Tipan, a Church-based non-government group in north Quezon, initiated the coastal clean-up day celebration in the Polillio-Real-Infanta-General Nakar area.

Hundreds of sacks filled with garbage that littered the shores of Tayabas Bay in the coastal villages of Dalahican and Talao-Talao were seen being hauled by rifle-toting soldiers from the military's Southern Luzon Command.

Marcelo Magadia, Dalahican village chair, partly blamed the management of the port authority, for the continuous littering along the village's shores.

"Most of the garbage comes from the inter-island ships that drop anchor inside the port. They just dump their garbage into the sea, which is being washed ashore," he said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Baguio activists model shirts, pose like 'MIB' to put message across

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Who says President Macapagal-Arroyo and her "power team" have the exclusive rights to pose the Men in Black (MIB)?

Activists and members of militant groups here let their hair loose on Friday, the eve of the 30th anniversary of the declaration of martial law, to be the "models" in a mini-fashion show that showcased human rights shirts. They wore dark glasses to mock the cover photograph of Ms Macapagal and four Cabinet members in the first anniversary issue of the Philippine Tatler magazine.

"The MIB pose of President Macapagal-Arroyo and her Cabinet members is reminiscent of martial law. The MIB is like the ruling elite, the epitome of the fascism of the state," said Voltaire Tupaz, secretary general of the militant group Tongtongan ti Umili.

The mini-fashion show, which was part of the "Songs of Freedom" concert staged to commemorate the anniversary of the imposition of martial law, was staged to promote the shirts. Sold at P150 each, sales from the shirts would go to the projects of non-government groups here.

The six models came from the party-list group Bayan Muna, Cordillera Peoples Alliance, Innabuyog-Gabriela, Dap-Ayan Iti Kultura Iti Kordilyera and the urban poor group Ornus.

"*Sa wakas, natupad na rin ang pangarap kong maging* fashion *at* ramp model (At last, my dreams of becoming a fashion and ramp model have finally come true)," Manuel Loste, coordinator of Bayan Muna-Northern Luzon and one of the "models," said.

"Activists are really like that. They are not afraid to do crazy things to prove a point," one of the activist-models said in Filipino.

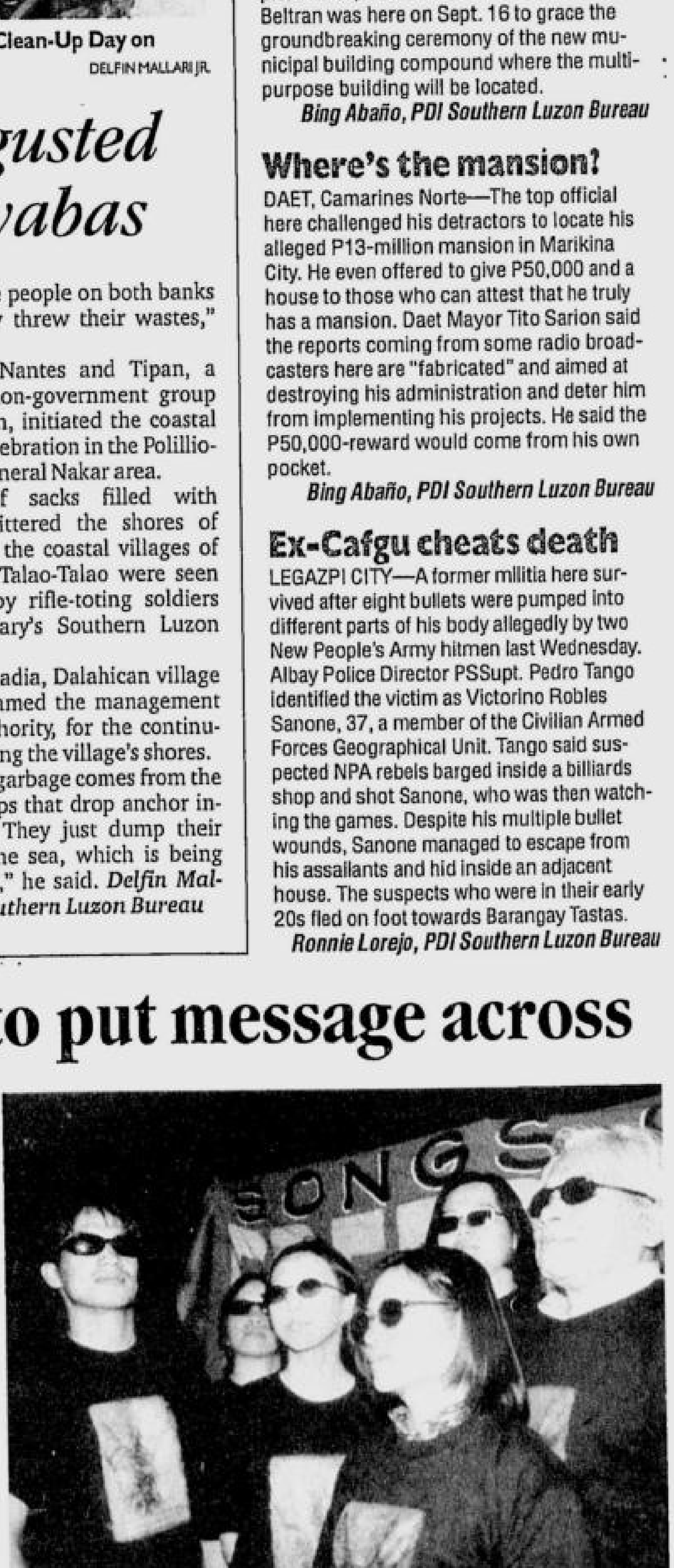
The black shirt features an image of tied hands with the words, *"Lagutin ang tanikala ng pang-aapi at kawalan ng hustisya! Palayain ang mga api!* (Break the chain of oppression and injustice! Free the oppressed!)."

The concert, on the other hand, had treated about 100 people gathered at the People's Park here on Friday to protest songs from the 1970s to 1990s. Several songs were original compositions of Cordillera activists.

Among the songs featured in the concert were "Abakada," "Pauwi sa Amin," "Bayan Namin," "Awit ng Magbubukid," "Huling Balita," "Kundiman ng Kordilyera," "Manong Pawikan," "Batingaw," "Karapatang Pantao" and "May Bahay."

"Garison ng Maton," an original composition by Ridaw, a Baguio-based singing group, tackled the situation of political detainees who were tortured by Army soldiers.

"We had a horrifying experience during the martial law years. The people now know the consequences. We have to prevent this from happening again by reminding the people, especially the younger generations, in any way we can, to stop the suppression of human rights," said Loste, a former political detainee. With a report from *Zenaida Kezoven, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



THE MEN and women in black display their shirts during a concert that remembered the dark days of Martial rule on Sept. 21.
TOOTS SOBERANO

US readies 100,000 troops for Iraq war

From page A1

resolution on disarmament that Washington wants to push through as a prelude to conflict.

"The international community should reject and oppose treacherous US efforts" to make the UN Security Council adopt a new resolution, said the party's mouthpiece, Ath-Thawra newspaper.

"There is no objective need or justification to adopt a new resolution and the overwhelming majority of the world's countries know this. They understand that the goal of such a resolution is to bypass Iraq's decision to accept the return of inspectors and sabotage its dialogue with the United Nations," the paper said.

Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan made his own appeal Saturday night in Baghdad.

"The United Nations should assume its role as an international organization responsible for peace and security in the world by settling international conflicts through peaceful means," Ramadan said.

The world body "should not serve as a platform or a tool for aggression," he said.

Amid mounting US threats of military action, Iraq offered on Sept. 16 to readmit UN arms inspectors after a near four-year break, but said later it would not accept any new UN resolution imposing new terms for their deployment.

Saying the obvious

In Warsaw for a Nato meeting, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said reports on US war plans "are saying the obvious.

"Obviously no one would want to harm the people of that country," he said.

"In a very real sense the people of that country are hostages to a small group of dictatorial, repressive government officials."

US national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said in a Financial Times interview published Monday that Washington would mobilize "sufficient force to win" a war against Iraq.

Rice laid out Washington's post-Cold War geopolitical doctrine, saying "the United States would want to be thought of as liberators" dedicated to the "democratization or the march of freedom in the Muslim world." She stressed that Bush wanted "a Security Council resolution that has effective measures" and sought to support "reformist elements" within Islam, mentioning Qatar, Bahrain and "to a certain extent" Jordan.

Sen. John McCain said he expected the United States to go to war against Iraq as he and other Republicans predicted overwhelming support for military action in the US Congress.

"I believe that we will, for a broad variety of reasons which we can get into, including the fact that basically he is a clear and present danger to the United States of America," McCain told NBC television.

"There are going to be a lot of Democrats that support" a resolution authorizing an attack on Iraq, Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama told CBS.

But Carl Levin, Democratic chair of the Senate armed services committee, called for the resolution to be watered down.

"It's much too broad. There's no limit at all on presidential powers. There needs to be some changes," the Michigan senator told Fox News. "It's a go-it-alone resolution, ultimately."

Bush asked Congress Thursday for sweeping authority to act against Iraq, even as Washington pushed the United Nations for a tough new resolution on arms inspections, scorning Baghdad's acceptance of the inspectors' return.

The world body was expected to receive a US proposal by midweek.

Blair cautious

In London, Washington's main ally, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, came under pressure from his own Cabinet to tread a more cautious line as he prepared to publish a 50-page document to coincide with a parliamentary debate Tuesday on Iraq that government sources say will confirm Saddam has biological and chemical weapons and is seeking nuclear capability.

"We cannot have another Gulf war," International Development Secretary Clare Short told ITV television.

"We cannot have the people of Iraq suffering again. They have suffered too much. That would be wrong . . . . We have to find a way of enforcing, quite rightly, UN resolutions."

The ruling Labor party is bitterly divided over the Iraq crisis, with dozens of the party's backbenchers threatening to vote against the government on Tuesday in a symbolic measure to show their opposition to Blair's handling of the affair. *AFP*

Palestinian girl gets kidney from blast victim

From page A1

a student from Glasgow, Scotland, who was on a Tel Aviv bus that a Palestinian blew up on Thursday.

Five Israelis and the bomber were killed outright. The critically wounded Jesner died at a Tel Aviv hospital on Friday and was buried in Jerusalem on the same day.

Jesner's family volunteered to donate his organs and put no restrictions on the choice of recipients. "We believe it was what he would have wanted us to do," said his stepmother, who declined to be named.

His eldest brother, Ari Jesner, told a news conference after the Saturday transplant that the recipient's religion or nationality was "unimportant."

"The most important principle is that life was given to another human being," Ari Jesner said. "The family is very proud that (Jonathan) was able to give life to others. We are happy and delighted that his memory will live on."

Officials at the Schneider Children's Hospital in the central Israeli town of Petah Tikva said on Sunday that Yasmin was in good condition but that it would take time to be certain.

But Yasmin's parents were grateful. "I don't know what to say to thank the family of the man killed in the attack," the Maariv daily quoted her mother, Rina, as saying. "I grieve for their loss and thank them for their donation which saved the life of my daughter."

Israeli checkpoints

The child and her family, who hold the Israeli identity cards given to residents of mostly Arab East Jerusalem, are often subject to Israeli military closures at checkpoints and roads near their home in Aqab, a village between Ramallah and East Jerusalem.

Her grandfather, Farouk, said reaching the Schneider hospital on Friday was not simple.

He said the Israeli Army had clamped down on Aqab residents leaving the village at night, so that when the family received the transplant offer at midnight, they had to take a longer route.

The Transplant Organization usually allows one hour for candidates to respond to a transplant offer, general director Tamar Ashkenazi said. But in the case of Yasmin's family, the organization waited two hours for the positive response.

Jesner came to Israel last year to study at a Jewish seminary for a year. He decided to extend his stay and put off medical school for a year, relatives said.

He planned to return to Israel from Glasgow after medical school.

YASMIN Abu-Ramilla, a 7-year-old Palestinian from East Jerusalem, recovers after a kidney transplant operation. REUTERS

Farouk expressed gratitude to Jesner's family and said he hoped to one day meet them and thank them personally.

Ari Jesner told reporters that he did not exclude the possibility of a meeting.

"But . . . the wounds are all so open. We are glad their daughter was able to be saved," he said, adding: "Life here is a bit of a lottery."

Since the fighting began, 1,876 people have been killed on the Palestinian side and 618 on the Israeli side. More than 250 Israelis have been killed in more than 70 Palestinian suicide bombing attacks. *Reports from AP, Reuters*

70 solons oppose...

From page A1

gao del Sur) and Willie Villarama (Bulacan) are asking the House committees on justice and on foreign affairs to "conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the status" of their wealthy colleague, a former close associate of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Pichay's office also released a petition signed by 115 of 130 barangay chairs in Jimenez's district asking the House to "safeguard the tenure" of the controversial lawmaker.

The resolution authors are also asking the two House committees to investigate the "actions and/or proceedings being made and are still being made" by the executive.

The Supreme Court had no comment on the resolutions rallying support for Jimenez (Mario Crespo in real life), who is facing extradition on charges of tax fraud and making illegal contributions to the US Democratic Party.

"It will not be prudent for us to comment on that," said Deputy Court Administrator Ismael Khan.

Khan described the congressmen as "very expressive" but declined to say if the resolutions would be interpreted as undue influence on and interference with the powers of the judiciary.

Khan also said the high court had "always been independent in its (acts)."

"That's our political system, our constitutional mandate," he said, adding that the separation of powers of the co-equal judiciary, legislature and executive "forms the bedrock of our system of government."

Khan was unsure whether the tribunal, which is to hold an en banc session today, would tackle and put to a vote the petition filed by the Department of Justice questioning the decision of the Manila extradition court to allow Jimenez to post bail.

"I have no knowledge of that. But the matter was calendared during the last en banc hearing," he said.

House sources said Jimenez "almost cried" to some congressmen the other night after learning that the high court would deny him bail.

But Jimenez denied knowledge of the impending decision of the tribunal. He said he had nothing to do with the filing of the resolutions but that he was happy for the support.

Other sources said the tribunal would either reverse or remand the case to the trial court for bail hearings.

Crisis

While the title of the resolutions seems tame, the contents are not.

HR 762 reads in part: "(T)he foregoing situation may result in a constitutional crisis, the consequences of which need immediate action of the House of Representatives."

It notes that the US extradition request was based on "alleged indictments for certain offenses" committed by Jimenez.

The two resolutions also read: "(T)he present undertakings of the executive department of the government of the Philippines in seeking the extradition of Hon. Crespo to the United States borders on violation of the principle of separation of powers between the executive and legislative departments of our government, Hon. Crespo being a duly elected and incumbent member of the House of Representatives."

After his indictment in the United States, Jimenez returned to the Philippines and served as adviser and major deal broker to Estrada. He won a seat in Congress during the May 2001 elections.

HR 762 says that if the extradition materializes, it will deprive the people of the sixth congressional district of Manila "able representation."

It says Jimenez's case will be a precedent in the country and that deciding the fate of a congressman "should be treated as a collective internal affair of the House."

"(T)he foregoing situation and the resulting effects thereof requires that the House of Representatives act with dispatch and promptness on this matter," it adds.

Sympathy

Suplico admitted that the resolutions were sympathetic to Jimenez.

"My position is that it is only the House which can decide whether to expel a member or not," he said.

Pichay said: "We're not doing this for Congressman Jimenez alone. We're doing this for other Filipinos who will be in a similar situation."

House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales said some congressmen had learned that the Supreme Court was set to issue a ruling that could reverse the Makati Regional Trial Court's decision allowing Jimenez to post bail.

With a reversal, Jimenez's P1-million bail will be cancelled and he will be arrested and detained while his case is being heard.

Gonzales warned that should this happen, the Supreme Court justices would risk impeachment.

"*Giyera na ito* (This means war). The justices will be acting like policemen," Gonzales told the INQUIRER by phone.

He said any ruling denying bail to Jimenez would violate the Constitution, which guarantees the right to suspects charged with crimes that are not classified as heinous.

Gonzales said that even in the United States, making illegal campaign contributions was a bailable offense.

"So if the Supreme Court will issue a ruling reversing the trial court, it means that we are stricter when it comes to our own citizens. Isn't being a congressman good enough (guarantee that he will not flee prosecution?)," he said.

Gonzales also said Jimenez's extradition case was evidently politically motivated, because his testimony would be used by the Republicans against the Democrats.

Supporters

Among those who signed the resolutions were Deputy Speaker for Mindanao Gerry Salappudin, Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II, Minority Leader Carlos Padilla, and Representatives Juan Miguel Zubiri, Teddy Locsin Jr., Satur Ocampo, Ruben Torres, Benasing Macarambon Jr. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo, Federico Sandoval, Reynaldo Calalay, Edmund Reyes, Augusto Syjuco, Ronaldo Zamora, Ruffy Bizon, Del de Guzman and Aniceto Saludo Jr.

In their own petition, the 115 barangay chairs of Manila's sixth district urged Speaker Jose de Venecia to protect Jimenez. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

DOJ chief defies gag order on envoy tiff

From page A1

"I was told not to make further statements about this," Perez said in a text message to reporters who had called his mobile phone. He added: "I'm sure diligent media have ways of looking into (the letter)."

But Justice Undersecretary Manuel A.J. Teehankee, spokesperson for the DOJ, refused to oblige.

"It would not be appropriate" to divulge the contents of the letter, he told the INQUIRER. "It's now with the DFA. We're confident that this issue will be resolved (soon)."

Teehankee also said acting Foreign Secretary Lauro Baja Jr. had already met with Wang to discuss the matter.

Asked if Perez and Wang would be asked to meet again to settle issues, he said: "Probably."

He also said the DFA and the DOJ were trying to patch up the two officials' differences "while keeping in mind (the necessity of upholding) the rule of law and legal processes and procedures."

Wang has supposedly asked the DFA to resolve the row with Perez before tomorrow, when Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian arrives to discuss defense and security issues with Philippine officials.

"We want to do this the proper way, with the broader interests of the country in mind," Foreign Secretary Ople said yesterday in a statement from Copenhagen.

DFA spokesperson Victoriano Lecaros said Ople had ordered that the people working to resolve the row "be given the room they need."

Bully

Perez had earlier said Wang raised his voice and later pounded on the justice secretary's table while they were discussing China's request that the poachers be released. But the Chinese Embassy said Perez's recollection of the meeting was "one-sided and inaccurate."

The DOJ position is that the 122 Chinese—arrested during the period January-May in the Tubbataha Marine Park in the Sulu Sea—should plead guilty to charges of poaching and violation of the Endangered Species Law and pay the corresponding penalties before they could be released.

According to Perez, the envoy earlier agreed to this but later insisted on the poachers' unconditional release.

"This I cannot do," Perez had said. "And if the ambassador feels that he can just bully the (DOJ), he will be in for a surprise because we are not going to be bullied by anyone to ignore the law."

A DFA official privy to Wang's meeting Sunday with Foreign Undersecretary Delia Albert said the envoy "seemed apologetic over what had happened" but "did not actually say sorry."

But the source said he did not think the quarrel would affect Chi's meetings with Philippine officials, which were arranged long before the row took place.

Ople said Perez had every right to bring to the DFA's attention any instance where he felt aggrieved by a foreign ambassador.

"We shall brook no interference with Philippine laws protecting the environment and our own territorial waters. In the same manner, however, we must do everything possible to preserve the good relations we have with China," Ople said.

China and the Philippines have conflicting claims on the Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

Passion

Sen. Manuel Villar said Filipino envoys should emulate Wang in being "spunky" and "very passionate about protecting his own countrymen."

Acknowledging that it was hardly the kind of statement one should hear from the chair of the Senate foreign relations committee, Villar said he was "risking misinterpretation" to drive home a point.

"Who among our ambassadors would risk being declared persona non grata because he or she wanted to defend a countryman?" he told the INQUIRER.

But the senator was quick to point out that he was not taking Wang's side. "(The DFA) can declare Wang persona non grata for all I care," he said. "But what I want noted is Wang's persistence and assertiveness in trying to protect his countrymen."

Villar pointed out that compared with the Chinese poachers, Filipino workers had suffered [illegible]se treatment under worse conditions in other countries.

"More often than not, (embassy or consular officials) say nothing and do not even assert the rights of our workers," he said. "While he behaved in a manner that may be quite arrogant, Wang also showed that he is very passionate about protecting his own countrymen."

But the senator stressed that "unlike Wang who wanted to short-cut the law to protect his countrymen," Philippine envoys should always respect the laws in their host countries.

At the opening of the 7th Leyte Boy Scout Jamboree in Tanauan town some 17 km south of Tacloban City, Villar told the INQUIRER that the DFA inaction on the matter would reflect the administration's supposed "foreign policy of fear."

"We're afraid of Malaysia, Indonesia, China. We're afraid of all other countries," he said in Filipino.

Villar urged the DFA to ask Wang to publicly apologize for his behavior in Perez's office.

"If we cannot declare the Chinese ambassador persona non grata, at least the DFA should ask him to issue a public apology or the DFA should issue a strong statement condemning his act," Villar said. "Our ambassadors cannot do that at their places of assignment."

Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra urged the government to stand firm on the case of the poachers.

"Friendship between China and the Philippines must be based on mutual respect," he said. "But how can we maintain friendship if they destroy our natural resources?"

Mitra said it appeared that the Chinese had been getting their way because 20 such poaching cases were dismissed during past administrations.

"Palaweños have been very patient in the past, but the Chinese have abused and taken advantage of our diplomatic ties," he said.

He also demanded that Wang be replaced.

In Puerto Princesa City, where more than 400 residents held a protest rally on Sept. 18 during the poachers' pre-trial at the regional trial court, people continued to talk about the quarrel between Perez and Wang.

Offie Bernardino, director of the Palawan NGO Network Incorporated (PNNI), said the row was just one of the many instances showing how diplomatic relations between China and the Philippines were abused every time the release of apprehended Chinese poachers was involved.

The PNNI, a coalition of 23 nongovernment and people's organizations, led the human line of seminarians, students, priests, environmentalists and government leaders protesting the supposed efforts of the national government to compromise the cases against Chinese fishermen apprehended in Palawan.

Bernardino said the incident also showed that China did not recognize that its nationals violated Philippine laws.

She called on Palaweños to join a rally to be held on Sept. 27 during the pre-trial of the Chinese, including another 38 recently apprehended. *With reports from Rocky Nazareno, Juliet L. Javellana and Christine Avendano in Manila; Dominique Monera-Tabora, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau; Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Censors chief eludes NBI arrest, posts bail

From page A1

P50,000 in bouncing check that she issued to pay for prawns she ordered in 1986.

But before she could be arrested, Dinglasan posted a bail of P1,000 even as she declared, "If the President is tough, so am I."

Saying her detractors "made a serious mistake," Dinglasan, a classmate of President Macapagal-Arroyo's at the Assumption whom she appointed to the MTRCB only in June, warned: "My resolve to flush them out has just trebled, and I'm going to finish them off."

Judge Juan Nabong Jr. of the Manila Regional Trial Court's Branch 32 issued the warrant for Dinglasan's arrest for violation of Batas Pambansa 22, or the Anti-Bouncing Check Law.

"It is an ordinary police work," said NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco as his agents went looking for Dinglasan. "It is an ordinary police work. It just so happens that the person who is the subject of the warrant is not an ordinary person."

Some of the NBI agents went to her house in Malate, Manila, but they did not find her there.

An order from Judge Vivencio S. Baclig was faxed by the Conti and Associates Law Office to the NBI press office late in the afternoon. It said Dinglasan posted a P1,000 bail bond with the Quezon City Regional Trial Court.

The complainant, businesswoman Carmelita Romero, said through her lawyer, Raul Lambino, that the case stemmed from a failed business deal she had with Dinglasan in 1986.

Romero said she supplied Dinglasan and her husband Rafael with prawns for the couple's export business. But Dinglasan paid her a Solid Bank check for P50,000 that bounced, she said.

Rafael also gave her several checks but they also bounced, according to Romero's complaint.

Romero alleged that the Dinglasans owed her about P2 million.

Another woman, Alice Peralejo, is also alleging in another case that Dinglasan owed her P13 million. Peralejo is the mother of young sex siren Rica Peralejo.

Lambino claimed that the case was archived in 1986 after Dinglasan jumped bail and did not appear for the court hearings.

The lawyer said his client decided to revive the case after seeing Dinglasan on TV.

"I asked her if she was prepared to go ahead with this since the person we're going after is a presidential appointee," Lambino said of his client. "She said yes."

DINGLASAN: It's part of a "rabid witch-hunt." FILE PHOTO/MIKE ALQUINTO

In a statement she issued in the afternoon, Dinglasan said there was "a rabid witch-hunt" against her.

"My detractors filed a silly case before the Ombudsman two weeks ago," she said. "Having neither sense nor evidence, it did not fly. Now, they have resurrected a charge that has been gathering dust in the court archives since 1986. I was never arraigned for that case which has only a prescription period of four years."

The Ombudsman case filed against her by officers, members and employees of the MTRCB included allegations of "arbitrary, dubious and unnecessary disbursements of MTRCB funds for public information expenses."

Dinglasan did not identify her "enemies" but she said "they are well-organized. They are well-financed. And most of all they are ruthless."

"As the maxim goes, *Vigilantes et non dormientibus jura subveniunt*: The laws aid those who are vigilant, not those who sleep on their rights," she said in her statement.

Dinglasan later told the INQUIRER on the phone: "I am not aware of any estafa case against me . . . There might be some from many years ago when I was still a businesswoman. I don't understand why they are reviving the cases when they could have done this a long time ago. *Bakit kaya naging* quiet *sila* all this time?"

She added: "I am submitting my liberty to the court process. If the President is tough, so am I. These people are making a serious mistake in putting clean government officials like me in bad light."

GMA approval

From page A1

performance satisfied 54.9 percent of respondents with 26.5 percent dissatisfied—her highest net satisfaction rating since she took office in January last year.

SWS pointed to three events that "would not have been favorable" to the President's popularity. These were the resignations of Education Secretary Raul Roco (Aug. 13) and Bureau of Internal Revenue Commissioner Rene Bañez (Aug. 19), the abduction of six Jehovah's Witnesses by Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu (Aug. 20) and the expulsion of thousands of Filipinos from Sabah. Two of the Jehovah's Witnesses were beheaded by their captors.

Militant groups said the Philippine government's alleged failure to protect the rights of Filipinos in Sabah was partly to blame for their mass expulsion from Malaysia.

SWS, however, said Ms Macapagal's net satisfaction rating was "back to (the) usual moderate level."

"The new satisfaction rating is close to the President's previous 18 in May 2001, 16 in July 2001, 15 in September 2001, and 16 in March 2002, which were all moderately favorable," SWS said.

It pointed out that while the President's net rating of 18 "is below the fairly good 28" in its post-Sona survey, it was "above the rather low 4" rating in the second quarter survey of May 17-June 17, which was attributed to high electricity costs.

SWS cited "major events likely to have been favorable to the President" between May 17 and June and the Aug. 6-9 surveys that could explain the increase in her net rating from 4 to 28. These were the rescue of American hostage Gracia Burnham (June 7), the killing of Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Sabaya (June 21), Ms Macapagal's Sona (June 22) and the administration's gaining control of the Senate.

The latest survey, which covered 1,200 adults, has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent and a confidence level of 95 percent. This time, the survey was not commissioned by anyone, according to SWS.

SWS said most Filipinos rated the President's efforts to deal with six major problems as "either 'very serious" or "somewhat serious." These were fighting terrorism, illegal drugs and kidnapping, helping the poor, developing Mindanao, and fighting corruption.

The respondents were asked what they would do to improve the economy if they were the President. Twenty-seven percent said they would provide jobs or livelihood. Fifteen percent said they would fight corruption and 11 percent said they would fight inflation. Ten percent said they would help the poor. *Reports from Carlito Pablo and Reuters*

'Destabilization' plot behind road scam dismissed

From page A1

and stating that this is a fictitious letter," Defensor said.

The Council of the AFP Sergeant Majors, which acts as links between the top brass and the enlisted personnel, had earlier disowned the letter.

Simple case of fraud

In an interview with Palace reporters, whistle-blower Sulficio Tagud Jr. dismissed the claim made by a Malacañang insider that his exposé about the alleged PEA road scam was part of a destabilization campaign against the government.

"They're thinking of so many conspiracy theories. It's a simple case of fraud and thievery," Tagud said.

But PEA Chair Ernest Villareal is prepared to prove his case that there is indeed a conspiracy to pull down the Macapagal administration.

In a phone interview, Villareal said he would submit today a "confidential report" to Ms Macapagal on the PEA's side on the road project and the destabilization plot against her.

"Yes. I will be naming names," Villareal said. He earlier said a retired military official, who was still prominent, and a lawmaker were behind the plot.

Villareal also previously said that based on reports, Pastor "Boy" Saycon of the Council on Philippine Affairs had helped Tagud circulate a report about the alleged scam.

"There are people out to destabilize the Macapagal administration and they've come out with an issue such as this," Villareal said.

But during a briefing of reporters at the PDMA, the PEA head described the information about the destabilization plot as "very raw."

"I received a very raw intelligence report that this supposed scam is only the tip of the iceberg (and is part) of a political plot to destabilize the government of our President," he said. He said the information was sent to him by someone he did not identify.

A militant group scoffed at claims by Malacañang "sources" that the exposé on the overpricing of the PDMA was part of destabilization efforts against the administration.

The fisherfolk group Pamalakaya accused the Macapagal administration of "reviving the phantasm of destabilization plots."

"Malacañang is again spinning another tale to cover up for those who were linked to the scandal and to make it appear that the real target is the President," said Fernando Hicap, Pamalakaya national chair.

Badly written script

Hicap said Malacañang had been using "this badly written script over and over again" every time First Gentleman Mike Arroyo or any of Ms Macapagal's key appointees were implicated in scandals.

He said the administration had not answered the allegations objectively. "Malacañang's failure to make fair-and-square responses over charges of corruption pushed the administration to fabricate stories of make-believe like destabilization plots against the government," he said.

Pamalakaya reiterated its proposal for a thorough investigation of the PDMA by the Senate blue ribbon committee and by an independent group.

Biazon has filed a resolution seeking clarification of the following issues related to the PDMA project:

- The 600-million overprice and payment to Jesusito D. Legaspi Construction (JDLC), which built 2.3 km of the road.
- Whether the payment in the form of land to Shoemart Inc. and DM Wenceslao Construction, which built sections of the road, was disadvantageous to the government.
- An examination of the charters of both the Public Estates Authority and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) to ascertain if the transaction was governed by their rules.

A P1-billion loan from the GSIS financed the construction of the road, which is intended to decongest traffic along Roxas Boulevard and to pave the way for the development of the 750-hectare reclamation area.

"This gargantuan loan for a measly 2.3-km portion at the Manila Bay reclamation area constitutes a public indebtedness and burden on the part of the government," Biazon said.

Another senator, Gregorio Honasan, said the President should act on the controversy to prove that her administration was serious in pursuing a no-nonsense campaign against corruption.

"If indeed the PEA management colluded with the JDLC to perpetrate this monstrous scam, then heads must roll and be made to suffer for milking the GSIS of the hard-earned contributions of government employees," Biazon said.

Senate report

To prevent a repeat of the controversy, Sen. Edgardo Angara urged his colleagues to act on Committee Report No. 67 , which seeks to ban cost adjustments and change orders in government contracts.

The report, to be known as Government Procurement Act of 2002, was based on three bills filed separately by Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda, Senators Sergio Osmeña III and Robert Jaworski.

"The practice of cost adjustments and change orders will be things of the past under the proposed law," Angara said.

In Camp Aguinaldo, Defensor said Kasundalohan wanted to destabilize the AFP, not the government.

"Obviously, that letter was written by somebody who wants to destabilize the AFP. We don't even know if that is really a group. Who knows if it's only one person," he said. ***With reports from Gerald Lacuarta and Juliet L. Javellana***

Velarde bank balance: Only P2,770

From page A1

posed President, has a balance of only P2,770.69, according to a certification presented by Equitable PCI Bank yesterday to the Sandiganbayan Special Division.

Gerardo Banzon, Equitable manager for legal advisory, informed the anti-graft court that the bank had put on hold the Velarde account at its Juan Luna-Binondo branch.

Six accounts under the name of Yolanda Ricaforte, Estrada's alleged "jueteng" auditor," have also been frozen. The accounts have total deposits amounting to P12.4 million, believed to be part of Estrada's alleged jueteng payoffs.

These are found in the bank's Scout Tobias (Quezon City) branch with a deposit of P7,832,702.17; Matalino-Diliman (Quezon City) branch with P2,337,369.86; Robinson's Place (Manila) branch with P710, 441.55; Scout Albano (Quezon City) branch with P631,731.95; ESB-Isidora Hills branch with P603,488.53; and T.M. Kalaw-Luneta (Manila) branch with P331,578.20.

The prosecution has alleged that Estrada deposited under the Velarde account a total of P3.2 billion, which allegedly came from illegal gambling kickbacks, embezzled state funds and profits derived from insider trading at the stock exchange.

But according to the Equitable certification dated Sept. 18, the account has a balance of P2,770.69.

Freeze order

On Sept. 8, the Sandiganbayan ordered a freeze on the bank accounts registered under "Jose Velarde," Estrada's alleged alias, and P11.13 million in deposits made by Ricaforte in six branches of Equitable PCI Bank.

It said the freeze aimed "to prevent assets from being lost, transferred or reduced in value should the accused be found guilty and ordered to pay the State for damages."

Also ordered frozen were a P540-million house and lot at 25 Freedom Ave., Area I, Veterans Village, Barangay Pasong Tamo, Quezon City; a house and lot at 18 Manansala St., Corinthian Gardens, Quezon City, belonging to Charlie "Atong" Ang, a close friend of Estrada's and allegedly responsible for "jueteng" collections; and bank deposits under the name of the Erap (Estrada's moniker) Muslim Youth Foundation amounting to P201.4 million as of September 2000.

Defense counsels have asked the Sandiganbayan to reconsider its decision to place on hold the properties and assets. In a 35-page motion for reconsideration, they argued that the government prosecutors had failed to verify whether the assets and properties belonged to Estrada.

Earlier, Prospero Crescini, one of the 13 defense lawyers appointed by the Sandiganbayan, said his panel had been able to establish that Estrada is not Jose Velarde.

Citing the testimony of lawyer Manuel Curato, first vice president and legal services division chief of the Equitable PCI Bank, Crescini said Estrada signed on Feb. 4, 2000 the name "Jose Velarde" under the printed words "the principal(s) by" in the bank's Investment Management Agreement (IMA).

Curato had testified that he and Clarissa Ocampo, Equitable PCI Bank trust officer, had taken bank documents to Malacañang to get Estrada's permission to invest part of the deposits in another account.

Crescini said the former President had merely acted as a representative of the real Jose Velarde when he signed at least five documents of the bank.

He added that Estrada's friend, businessman Jaime Dichaves, had admitted to owning the Velarde account. Dichaves is the subject of a warrant of arrest issued by the Sandiganbayan special division.

Estrada had been quoted in another newspaper that while it was true that he had signed the papers as Jose Velarde, his signature was not honored by the bank, "precisely because I am not Jose Velarde and the signature is not that of Jaime Dichaves, the owner of the mother account under the control of Jaime."

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23 Afghans to Asiad

KABUL–Twenty-three athletes will fly the flag for the new-look Afghanistan at this month's Asian Games in the country's first appearance for six years at a major international sports event. Boxers, wrestlers and cyclists will seek to overcome a lack of facilities and training to take on Asia's best in the South Korean city of Busan. AFP

SPORTS

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ACHILLES HEEL SURGERY

Seigle out of Asiad, rest of 2002 season

By June Navarro

DANNY Seigle, the RP team's top offensive gunner, is definitely out of the Asian Games and the remainder of the 2002 PBA season after undergoing surgery yesterday on his left achilles heel.

The 6-foot-5 Seigle suffered a torn ligament on his left achilles tendon during the RP-Qatar tune-up game Sunday night and went under the knife at 5 a.m.

Noted orthopaedic surgeon Dr.Jose Raul Canlas, a part of the national contingent's medical team in the Busan Asiad which will begin next week, successfully performed the operation on the San Miguel Beer swingman at the St. Luke's Medical Center.

Seigle, whose injury came at the heels of a recuperated right hamstring pull, is set to check out of the SLMC today after being confined Sunday night. His full recovery may take six months though.

RP headcoach Jong Uichico said it was a big blow to the PBA-powered national squad, which will depart tomorrow for the quadrennial event slated Sept. 28-Oct. 14.

"Danny S. gives us a lot of flexibility on the court. He can play three positions all together. Now that he's out of the Asian Games, we will have to make some adjustments to fill the void he had left," said Uichico.

On Seigle's replacement, it will be a toss-up among the three reserves–Boyet Fernandez, Mick Pennisi and Chris Jackson–but Uichico stressed that it doesn't necessarily mean a cager of the same position would take his place.

"It could be anyone among the three. We'll check the best possible combination and try to balance the roster." said Uichico, who inserted Kenneth Duremdes into the starting lineup composed of Asi Taulava, Eric Menk, Jeffrey Cariaso and Olsen Racela.

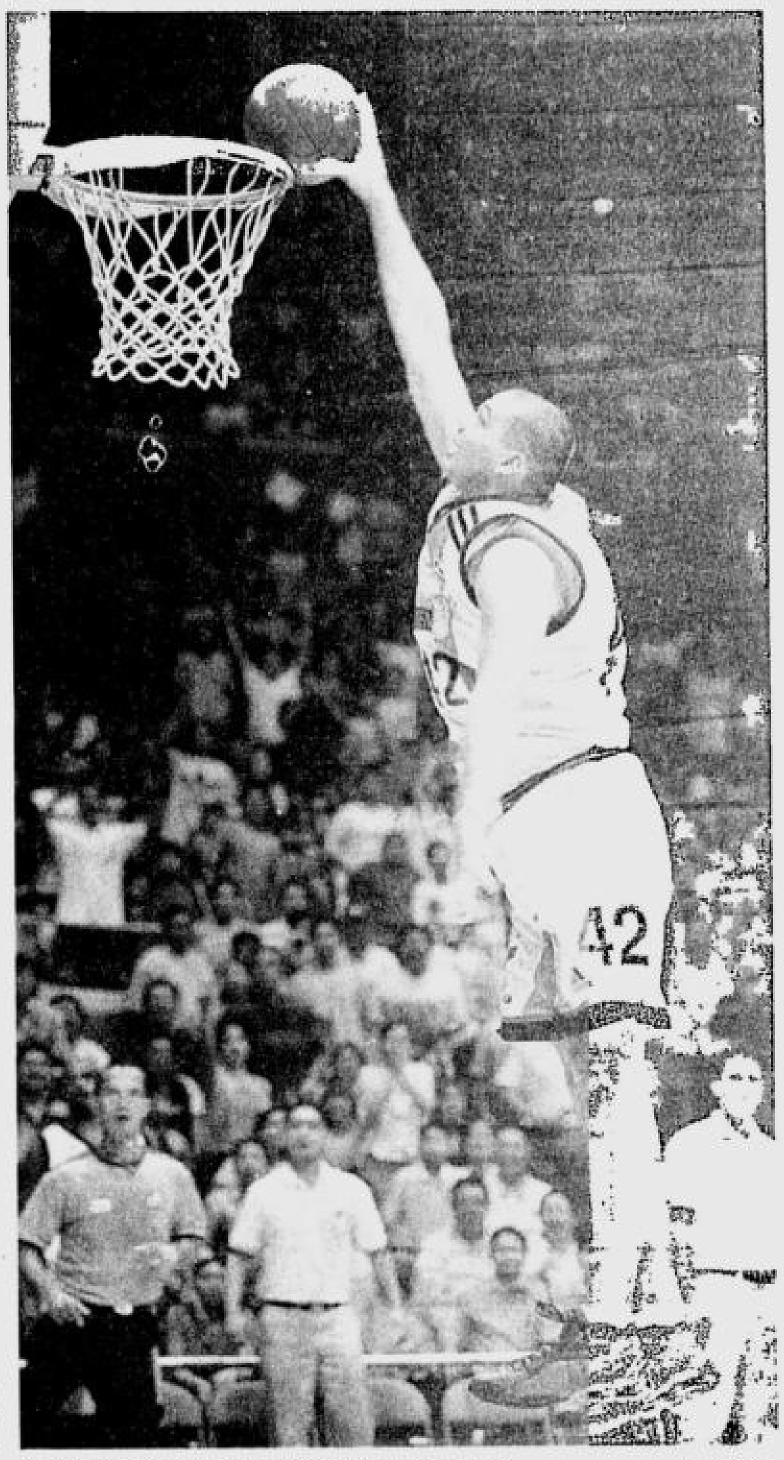
Uichico said the team would make an announcement on Seigle's replacement on Sept. 26 during the manager's meeting of the Asian Games organizers.

Uichico also feared Danny Seigle's elder brother, Andy, might also miss the Asiad after suffering from back spasms while stretching before the RP-Qatar match also on Sunday.

If ever, the absence of the Seigles will dim the country's chances of winning the gold medal in the Asiad. Uichico, however, remains upbeat that the Nationals can surpass formidable odds.

"We have bright hopes that we could beat our opponents in Group C of the basketball competitions and get past the first round," said Uichico.

The Philippines is in Group C together with UAE and North Korea, which the Nationals will face on Sept. 28 and 30, respectively.



SEIGLE'S slam dunks will be missed in Busan. FILE PHOTO

Selecta-RP repeats over Qatar, 83-71

By June Navarro

THE SELECTA-RP team wrapped up the final phase of its build-up for the Asian Games with an ego-boosting 83-71 victory over Qatar last night at the Philsports Arena.

The Nationals displayed a good outside game and responded with vigor and energy to the absence of Danny Seigle, who will miss the Asian Games after hurting his left achilles heel last Sunday during the opener of RP-Qatar series.

"It's really unfortunate that we lost Danny (Seigle) but the players showed that they can take the slack that he has vacated," said RP coach Jong Uichico.

Uichico and the Nationals also dedicated the victory over the Qataris to coach Ron Jacobs, who had to delegate the coaching chores of the national squad to Uichico after suffering from a stroke early this year.

"In the absence of Danny S., we are forced to install major adjustments on our philosophy and strategy," said Uichico.

Against the Qataris, the Nationals shot more triples than usual while choking the enemy with a smothering defense in 40 minutes of action.

Uichico inserted Kenneth Duremdes in the starting lineup to fill the void left by Seigle.

"He's (Duremdes) used to being a starter. kThe problem now lies on who will come off the bench to replace the role of Kenneth," said Uichico, who pointed to Noy Castillo, Rudy Hatfield and Dondon Hontiveros as the possible replacement to Duremdes off the bench.

The Nationals, who will face UAE and North Korea in the Busan Asiad on Sept. 28 and 30, respectively, won all but one of their warm-up matches here in the country.

The Nationals won over Chinese-Taipei and Qatar twice and split their encounter with the Melbourne Tigers early this month.

Cheers to the Eagles, tears for Danny & Jong

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IT happened not once but twice.

How can you beat that?

Only the likes of a Michael Jordan could have done such magic. In his heyday, His Airness was lightning striking twice personified most of the time.

I'm still in a state of shock this very minute. Listen:

George Chia fired a shot that tied it with the game 35 ticks away from completion. With almost no time left, he made a reload and fired again. This time, it did not only find its mark, it also won it for Ateneo over University of the East. By one shot, 72-70.

It was your Sunday Special Treat at its best.

Chia was not supposed to have made those shots, much less expected to fire them.

Just seconds back, he committed a pair of misshapen passes that resulted to gruesome turnovers. UE pounced on those miscues to storm ahead, 70-68, 50 ticks left.

The crowd cried for Chia's head after his second passing error. Ateneo coach Joel Banal ignored them.

Had Ateneo lost, Chia would have been turned from Eagle to goat.

Had Ateneo lost, Banal would have been turned from Eagle to goat.

But as if fated not to happen, Chia survived what seemed like a curse. From heel to hero, that's what became of him.

It was Banal's fortune to have an Eagle that cannot only soar but can also dish out a heart as ferocious as that of a lion's.

But while I applaud Chia's heroism, and raise a glass to Banal's eye for talent (remember, Chia played only three forgettable games last year when Banal wasn't around), I also felt sympathy for Paul Artadi.

Who wouldn't?

Artadi, the hottest Warrior this Sunday afternoon until there were 7.8 ticks remaining, was on his way to giving UE its first trip to the UAAP finals since 1979. He was like a Formula 1 car speeding to what appeared like an unmolested drive to the hoop. But just as glory was within a layup away for UE's No. 1 point guard, a demon blew the ball away from his grip for the turnover that will haunt Artadi for the rest of his life.

LA Tenorio, the Eagle who caused James Yap's charities for that 70-68 UE lead on a duty foul, took the inbounds pass from Rich Alvarez and next raced like hell down court. But finding his path blocked from the baseline, he flicked the one pass that made the night for Chia, Banal and all of Eagledom.

The dream showdown is on.

The best-of-three series between Ateneo and defending champion La Salle does not start until Thursday. But as early as Sunday night, I found myself bombarded with requests for tickets to the title series.

Dear, dear friends said they will pay for every ticket that I can produce.

I wish I could buy a couple–even more. Trouble is, tickets have become as rare as rain in summer.

And to think that I am the sports editor of the nation's No. 1 newspaper.

Uwaaa! was Al Pacino's favorite expression in "Scent Of a Woman."

Me? Ugh!

Times have changed, indeed.

■

Talk about the "baddest" of breaks and you have the case of Danny Seigle, just about the most talented player in our national quintet.

To say that losing Seigle was a big blow to our campaign for the Asiad basketball gold is an understatement. To me, Danny S is almost one-fourth of the national team. You can't find a player as skillful and as talented as Danny S this side of the basketball globe.

The most that I can do now is pray for both Danny S and head coach Jong Uichico. Danny S for his speedy recovery, Jong U for steeling himself for the grind ahead made doubly tougher by the sidelining of an ace like Danny S.

Gift football festival rousing success

HUEBNER

MS UTE Huebner, the dynamic, pretty and modern manager-type lady tasked by the German Development Corporation as its Sector Advisor on Poverty Reduction and Conflict Management delivered the inspirational message to the participants of the GIFT football festival held at the Mindanao Civic Center in Tubod, Lanao del Norte, Sept. 5-6.

Dubbed as "GIFT" for short, the German Initiative in Football Towards peace in Mindanao is a peace promotional effort of the German Development Cooperation through the KASIBULAN 6-12 program of the Philippine Football federation. The Tubod event was made possible with the support of the Lanao del Norte government under Gov. Imelda "Angging" Quilbranza Dimaporo and the Department of Education.

About 1,238 football players (boys and girls) participated in the two-day football festival with thirty four teams participating in the 6-8 years old category, 66 teams in the 9-10 years old category, 54 teams in the 11-12 years old category, 14 teams in the 13-15 years old category and two teams in the Ladies Open.

Ms. Huebner rationalized GIFT as follows: "If we can help a worthwhile project such as KASIBULAN, project the image of our country as among the best in football and at the same time express our desire for peace in conflict areas in a concrete manner such as games bringing protagonists together, we shall have achieved our altruistic aims in more ways than one. GIFT is a small project wi[illegible] what we hope will be of large and long [illegible]nd lasting significance."

Bacolod lass sparks RP shooting triumph

THE PHILIPPINES, bannered by Bacolod City's Kaye P. Cabalatungan, topped the women's division of the 13th World Shoot Championship held in Pietersburg, South Africa, last Sept. 16-21.

Cabalatungan, who saw action in her first international competition through the support of San Miguel Corporation, also emerged as the women's individual champion in the grueling 35-stage, five-day shootfest. Two other Filipinas, Athena Lee of Cagayan de Oro and Manila-based Grace Tan, placed second and fourth, respectively, in the race for individual honors. Combined with Cabalatungan's first place finish, this enabled the Philippine to clinch the team championship trophy.

Host South Africa captured second place while the United States clinched third spot in the team competition. Other countries represented in the tournament included Russia, the Czech Republic, Great Britain, The Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand and Ecuador.

Amanda Kangleon of Ormoc City round out the four-woman Philippine entry to the practical shooting championship wherein 54 countries participated.

The 21-year old Cabalatungan, a consistent national tournament champion is the winner of the National Steel Challenge Championship held in Marikina recently. She has been a member of the Philippine practical shooting team for the past two years.

The World Shoot Championship is the premier event of the International Practical Shooting Confederation (IPSC) founded in 1976 to develop practical marksmanship as a sport promoting accuracy, power and speed into a winning combination as competitors shoot various targets in different shooting stages or environment. The IPSC promotes practical shooting in more than 60 countries from Argentina to Zimbabwe.

Remaneses tops table tennis tilt

TATAP president Victor Balbuena (left) with Philippine Navy's Johanne Remaneses, the 30-below age group champion. BETOY JOHNSON

PHILIPPINE Navy's Johanne Remaneses subdued Islas Seronio of University of the Philippines, 3-2, to rule the 30-and-under men's age-group of the Tatap national table tennis age group championships recently at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Letran's Jeffrey Yana also prevailed over Jean Calvin Haz of Cavite to capture the boys 20 and under at the close of the tournament which drew a total of 700 participants around the country.

Special awards were also granted to the youngest and oldest participants.

Nicole Paras, who placed second in the girls' 10 and under category, was the youngest at 7 years old while Maximiano Nunez of Laloma was the most senior competitor among the participants.

Victor Valbuena, president of the Table Tennis Association of the Philippines, awarded the medals to the 15 age-group winners.

Other gold medal winners in the men's category were Laloma's Gen. Pat Marcos (men's 61 and above), Nestor Ferre of QCYSDO (mens 60 and under), Quezon City's Roberto Arteche (men's 50 and under), Jonard Baldonado (men's 40 and under);

William Ng of YMCA (boys 17 and under), Aaron Jay Morales (boys 14 and under) and Olangapo City's Laemar Oria (boys 10 and under).

On the distaff side, YMCA's Teresa Ren ruled the women's 40 and under, Marell Lagunday won the women's 30 and under and Marife Lat of Adamson ran away with the girls 20 and under title.

Mandaluyong derby tonight

IT will be a fight to the finish among bigtime cockers when the "Concierto Sa Mandaluyong 5-Stag One Day Derby" gets going at the Mandaluyong Coliseum today. Derby sponsors are Pagcor and Washout Shampoo from Lakpue Drug Inc.

To host the event are Jimmy Mariquit of Angeles City and veteran derbyist Otic Geroso of Negros Occidental who said that more than 60 fights are lined-up today.

Competing are Elwin Javelosa, Mayor Baby Chua, Raffy Yulo, Muroy Dolorico and Ramon Mansenares of Negros Occidental, who will challenge Pampanga and Manila derbyists that include Dong Pineda, Mayor Tarzan Lazatin, Tony Lasala, sabong idol Patrick Antonio, Biboy Enriquez, OPMI president Vic Yu, Blandy Tolentino, Mauro Prieto, UCAP president Raymond Velayo, Jessie Viceo and Mayor Salvador Perez of Pangasinan.

Meanwhile, another 5-stag derby is all set this Thursday with consistent derbyists Blandy Tolentino and Manny Santos of San Pablo Heat entry. On Monday is the "Ucap Screening Committee 4-Stag Derby" with Ariel Garovillo, Tiago Cerilla and Rey Oliveros as hosts.

This will be followed by the "3rd Ucap Anito MB Kalvin Dominator 7-Stag Derby" on Oct. 1 and 3, with Mauro Prieto, Patrick Puno, Wilvin Sy, Alan Tan and Kerby Chua as hosts.

Interested parties may conta 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-234 at 534-4110.

CLOSING BOGEY

Woods holds off Goosen, wins by 1

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Antolin Fernando fired a 71 to top the Del Monte Open golf championship in Bukidnon. Also today in 1991, Leonor Santos timed 25 minutes, 38.92 seconds to break her own mark and snare the 5K North Star run in Batac, Ilocos Norte.

By Doug Ferguson

THOMASTOWN, Ireland—Tiger Woods got a bigger fight than he expected Sunday, then a real surprise at the end—his first and only bogey of an otherwise flawless victory in the American Express Championship.

"That last hole did get me," Woods said.

It was about the only thing that did during a week in which his worst round was a 67, he went 51 consecutive holes with nothing worse than a 4 on his scorecard, and he claimed his fifth World Golf Championship event.

But it wasn't easy.

Woods had a five-stroke lead going into the final round, closed with a 6-under 66 and still had to hit his best shot of the week—a wedge from deep, gnarly rough—for a birdie on the 17th hole to stave off a spectacular charge by Retief Goosen.

Goosen played six holes at 6-under par, including a 6-foot eagle putt on the 17th hole to get to within one shot, and had a career-best 62 to wind up one stroke behind.

"That is one of the best rounds I've played," Goosen said.

Woods finished at 25-under 263 for a one-stroke victory, matching his best score in relation to par in a 72-hole tournament.

It was also one of his most consistent tournaments striking the ball, a good sign with the Ryder Cup only five days away. Woods caused a stir earlier this week when he said he would rather win the this tournament — and the $1 million prize—than the Ryder Cup.

What he really wanted was his first tournament without a bogey. With victory all but assured when his tee shot found the fairway on the 18th hole, it looked as though nothing could stop him.

Click!

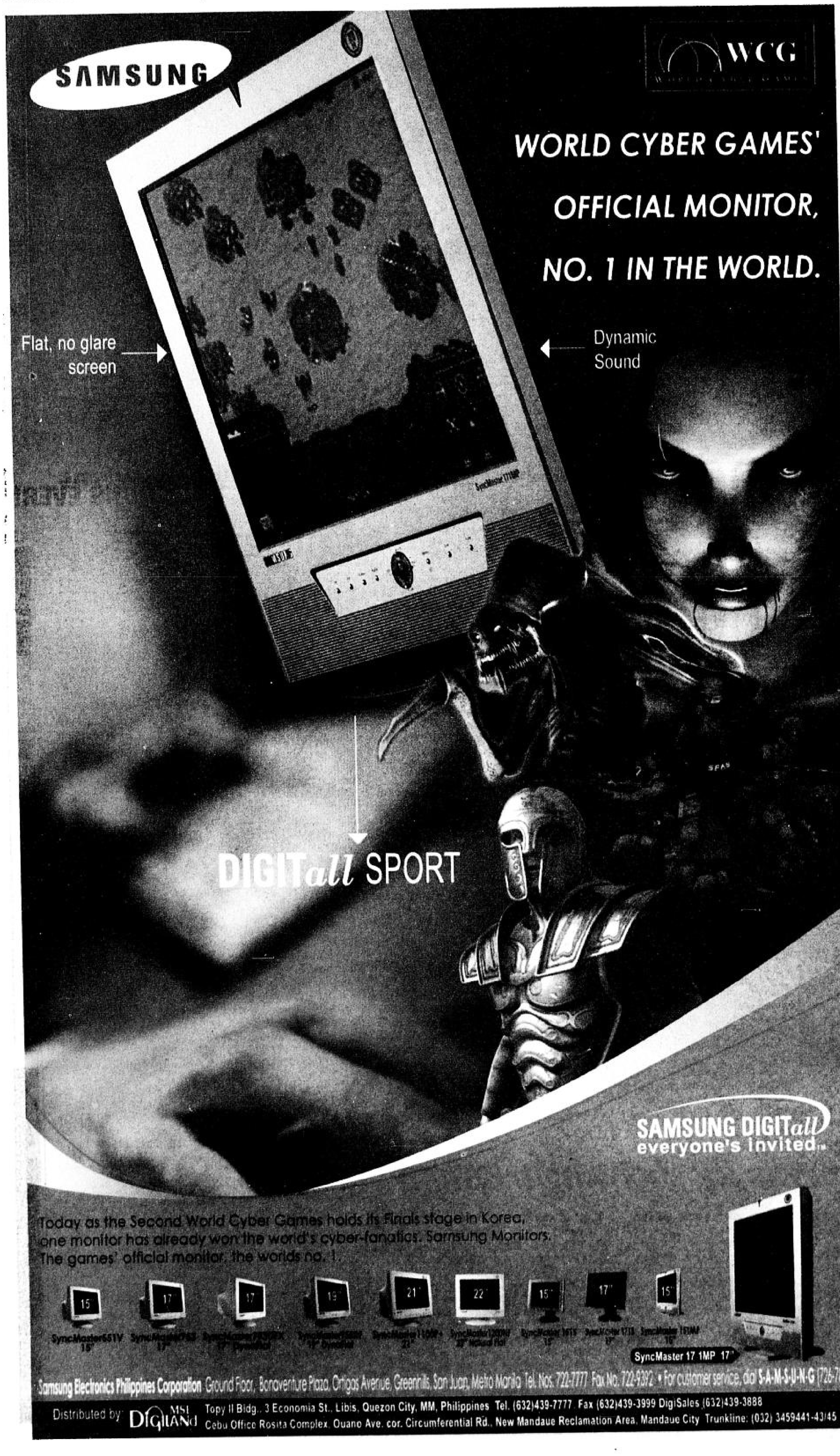
A photographer snapped a picture as Woods stood over his 4-iron, facing a 237-yard shot to a green guarded by sand and water. He backed off, glared at the photographer, then pushed his approach into right rough. He chipped to 3 1/2 feet, but missed the par putt. *AP*

Choi triumphs

PALM HARBOR, Florida—K.J. Choi shot a final-round 68 for a seven-shot victory in the Tampa Bay Classic on Sunday, winning for the second time this season.

Choi finished at 17-under-par, winning $468,000. *AP*

TIGER Woods with 'The Gene Sarazen Cup' after winning the American Express Championship. AFP



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US rallies to capture Solheim Cup

EDINA, Minnesota—After a comeback effort, the United States brought home one of the top prizes in women's golf—the Solheim Cup.

Led by Wendy Ward's clutch performance Sunday against Annika Sorenstam, the United States came from two matches down at the start of the day to beat Europe 15 1/2-12 1/2 and win back the coveted Waterford crystal cup.

Moments after the win was clinched, American captain Patty Sheehan dropped to her knees and laid her head to the ground in a moment of huge relief. A little later, she did cartwheels, just like she did when she won the Nabisco Championship six years ago for her sixth and final major.

"This is the topper right here," Sheehan said. "The Solheim Cup is the top. It doesn't get any better than this." *AP*

70 teams compete in Highlands Cup

THE TAGAYTAY Midlands Golf Club is gearing up for the very first Highlands Prime Cup tournament this weekend, Sept. 28.

More than 70 teams have confirmed participation to the Midland's biggest tournament of the year. The much-awaited tournament will be played using the scramble format. A brand-new Toyota Camry and a business class ticket to any Cathay Pacific destination are up for grabs.

The tournament formally introduces Highlands Prime Inc., which is a partnership between Belle Corporation and the SM Group of Companies to its members. Its maiden project, a five-hectare development called The Woodridge, will begin next month.

Highlands Prime Inc. was created to continue the ambitious pace of developing the residential community in Tagaytay Highlands and Tagaytay Midlands. The first 150-unit residential Woodridge community will take about 15 months to complete.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Blast at 8:30 a.m. on ESPN

NFL - St. Louis Rams vs Tampa Bay Buccaneers at 9 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.) on ESPN

Beginner's Guide To American Football at 12:30 p.m. on ESPN

BASEBALL: Sunday Night Baseball at 1 p.m. on ESPN

MOTOR SPORTS: 2002 F1 Highlights - Italian Grand Prix at 5 p.m. on Star Sports

World Rally Championships 2002 at 9 p.m. on Star Sports

SOCCER: English Premier League at 7 a.m. on Star Sports, Highlights at 5 p.m. on ESPN and 6 p.m. on Star Sports

Spanish Football League at 7 p.m. on Star Sports

TRACK AND FIELD: European Cup - Super League 2002 at 11 a.m. on Star Sports

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

Express Tour stakes ₱30M

AIRFREIGHT 2100-Fedex is working early to make sure that next year's cycling tour will be another smashing success.

Barely seven months before actual competition takes off, Airfreight 2100, the sole licensee of FedEx in the country, already laid out the blueprint for the staging of its second tour undertaking.

And the men behind it vow a summer spectacle that is bigger in scope and cash prizes.

"All systems go," proclaimed Airfreight 2100-FedEx chair Bert Lina, who along with Airfreight 2100 president Lito Alvarez, Tour executive director Mar Mardoza, technical committee head Paquito Rivas and consultant Cornelio Padilla Jr. mapped out a five-year plan to revive the sport of cycling in the country.

Tentatively billed "Express Tour ng Pilipinas," the event comes in the heels of the successful staging of the Express Tour of Calabarzon last June which Airfrieght 2100-FedEx initiated to revive the annual cycling tour-which had been shelved for almost three years.

Unlike its maiden venture, next year's edition will be a 14-lap race covering the Manila and Bicol regions, which Mendoza said would cost the giant delivery service a total of P30 million.

Out of such amount, Alvarez bared P3.2 million will be allotted as prize money, P1 million of which goes to the winning team and P200,00 to the individual champion.

"We have to increase the price package to make it more exciting and attractive to the riders," said Alvarez.

NBN promises grand coverage

SPORTS fans could look ahead to a fiesta atmosphere as the National Broadcasting Network brings the Busan Asian Games to Manila and right into the homes of Filipino families starting Sept. 29.

NBN chair Mia Concio yesterday bared the lavish preparation for the coverage of the said quadrennial meet from the opening ceremonies on Sept. 29 to its closing Oct. 14.

The government network will set up satellite studios at the Glorietta, Megamall, Robinson's Galleria and the Korean Embassy.

John-O rules dual meet

By Dennis U. Eroa

JOHN-O outgunned visiting Hapee Toothpaste-Cebu, 86-70, yesterday to clinch the PBL-CBF dual meet crown at the Pasig Sports Center.

In scoring their first major title, the John-O dribblers survived the Cebuanos' physical plays, while limiting their foes to five points in the final three minutes of play.

The Sparklers came close at 65-72 with 3:12 remaining but Bong Salvador and Al Vergara unveiled an 11-2 blast which ensured their victory, 83-67, 23.8 remaining.

"It's all heart. Everybody simply refused to lose," said John-O coach Manny Dandan. "The boys were unafraid to get hurt due to the physical game."

Ranidel de Ocampo, who finished with 12 points and nine rebounds, was adjudged the Most Valuable Player of the tournament. Joining him in the Mythical Five were Blu's Lou Gatumbato, Hapee's Peter "June" Simon and Reynel Hugnatan, and Chris Guerrero of Casino Rubbing Alcohol.

The 6-foot-5 De Ocampo also suffered a cut on his lip, following a furious undergoal battle but reliever Bryan Olaguer defended well against Hapee's big men Hugnatan and Allan Salangsang.

Casino Rubbing Alcohol beat Blu, 87-78, to finish third.

Scores:

JOHN-O 86—Salvador 18, Ferrer 18, Vergara 13, De Ocampo 12, Napa 8, Macapagal 7, Olaguer 6, Cole 2, Calimag 2, Bat-og 0.

HAPEE 70—Hugnatan 21, Salangsang 17, Saquilayan 10, Benedicto 6, Simon 4, Huelar 4, David 3, Arano 2, Mercado 2, Dy 2, Saniel 0, Garcia 0.

Quarters: 16-20, 35-36, 57-49, 86-70.

3 companies seek PBL entry

THE ENTRY of RFM and LBC was expected, but the application filed by Cebuana Lhuillier came as a pleasant surprise to the Philippine Basketball League.

These three big companies sent their letters of intent to join the PBL last Friday, according to PBL Commissioner Chino Trinidad.

RFM's return to the PBL and the acceptance of LBC are but a formality because the teams' owners—RFM's Joey Concepcion and LBC's Santi Araneta—have long been holding talks with Trinidad and PBL Chair Dioceldo Sy regarding their companies' joining the country's premiere amateur league.

Cebuana Lhuillier of Jean Henri Lhuillier only made its decision known Friday. *Roy Luarca*

NORTH Korean Ri Myong Hoon (right), the world's tallest basketball player at 7-foot-9, arrives at Busan's Gimhae International Airport, South Korea, Monday. AP

Army booters nip Kaya FC, keep title

LUISITO Brillantes scored the marginal marker in the 89th minute as Army came from behind to nip Kaya Football Club, 2-1, last Sunday to retain the Army-Utilco International Invitational Football Cup title at the Ascom field in Fort Bonifacio.

Brillantes' game-winning goal came following teammate Philip Caballero's equalizers five minutes earlier after the Army booters trailed 0-1 at the half as Kaya's Christian Lozano struck in the 44th for the icebreaker.

UP Diliman edged San Beda, 6-5, in a penalty shootout to bag third place in the first division.

Army B made it double celebration by shutting out El Magistrado, 3-0, to capture second division honors.

Veteran Judy Saluria (24th and 78th) scored two goals while teammate Millard Betita (55th) had the other goal in the lopsided match.

FEU subdued La Salle, 2-1, to place third in the second division.

Army's Luis Brillantes was cited as the Most Valuable Player in the first division while the honor went to Army B's Rick Cain in the second division.

France, Russia meet in Davis Cup final

LONDON—Defending champion France will meet Russia in the Davis Cup final after Sebastien Grosjean overcame an injured ankle to beat the United States' Andy Roddick at Roland Garros.

Grosjean was held aloft by his teammates after clinching a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 victory at the home of the French Open for an unassailable 3-1 lead.

While the French celebrated a third final appearance in four years, the Russians, who have never won the title, are there for the first time since 1995.

Marat Safin secured a place in the final for the two-time runner up by beating Wimbledon finalist David Nalbandian of Argentina 7-6 (3), 6-7 (5), 6-0, 6-3 at Moscow's Luzhniki sports palace. That also meant a 3-1 lead.

"I had an enormous desire to win," said Grosjean as the French stretched its winning Davis Cup streak to eight matches.

"He just stayed there mentally the whole time," Roddick said of his opponent. "I stuck with my game plan. I just didn't execute it well enough." AP

Montejo tops Milo netfest

ILAGAN, Isabela—Club netter Paolo Montejo demolished JV Custodio of Ilocos, 6-1, 6-2, to capture the unisex 10-under division at the close of the 2002 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop over the weekend here at the Ilagan Tennis Club. In the boys' 16-under event, Gerber Mamawal of Flos Carmeli-Quezon City downed Mico Ibanez, 6-3, 6-0, for the championship trophy in the Milo netfest organized by the CTW and supported by adidas and Sports Kids.

Montejo and Mamawal shared the limelight with Mary Ann Baliuag, who beat Yrene Palogan, 6-4, 6-1, in the girls' 14-under category; Paolo Monte, a 6-2, 6-3 winner over Alejandro Ibanez in the boys' 14-under class; and San Beda's Niel Fernandez who snared the boys' 18-under division title.

On hand to award the Milo trophies were regional tennis officer Ofemia Cruz and club president Ante Miranda.

Swiss action

BERN, Switzerland—The Swiss bid to host the 2010 winter Olympics received an apparently fatal blow Sunday when voters in a key region overwhelmingly refused to shoulder a share of the financing.

Martin Hodler, president of the Swiss bid committee, said he was "sad and disappointed" and that the council would decide on Friday whether to withdraw the bid.

"I hope that we will get the games," Hodler said. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Zoleta enters semifinals

TOP seed Bambi Zoleta barged into the girls' 14-under semifinals after beating Sarah Jane Lim, 6-2, 7-6 (0), yesterday in the Cargohaus Junior Tennis Cup at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Zoleta will meet Trudy Amoranto, a 6-0, 7-5 winner over Arianne Gumban, when this two-weekend event sponsored by Dunlop balls resumes on Friday. Also advancing were No. 2 Julie Em Botor and No. 4 Anna Buenviaje. Gaining semifinal slots in the boys' 12-under division were No. 2 Joshua Tan Ho and No. 4 Mark Balce.

Diaz defends suspension

UAAP technical committee head Prof. Francis "Kiko" Diaz clarified recently that Nathaniel "Sonny" Tadeo of Ateneo was given a one-game suspension because he was not a first-time offender. Tadeo, Enrico Villanueva's reliever, did not play during the Eagles' 72-70 squeaker over the UE Warriors last Sunday at the Araneta Coliseum. "Tadeo had already incurred a written reprimand during the Ateneo-Adamson match on Sept. 8 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum. UAAP rules (Sec. VII, Item B) states that a player who incurs a second reprimand shall be given a one-game suspension," Diaz explained. *Dennis U. Eroa*

Codiñera chess slated

THE 7TH annual Codiñera Memorial Open chess championships kicks off on Oct. 4-6 at the 3rd Floor of J&F Divino Bldg., located at 967 Aurora Boulevard near Anonas Street along Quirino District in Quezon City. Open to all chessplayers–masters, non-masters and beginners–the P30,000 annual affair is divided into two sections open and unrated. The open champion will receive the lion's share of P7,000 while the unrated will get P3,000. Registration is accepted at the MCC new headquarters at the fourth floor of the mini-arcade building. Call 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069.

BASEBALL RESULTS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

NY Yankees 4, Detroit 3; Toronto 12, Tampa Bay 6; Boston 13, Baltimore 2; Cleveland 6, Kansas City 5; Oakland 7, Texas 5; Seattle 3, Anaheim 2; Chi White Sox 8, Minnesota 2.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Atlanta 4, Florida 1; Philadelphia 4, Cincinnati 3; San Francisco 3, Milwaukee 1; Pittsburgh 5, Chicago Cub 4; St. Louis 7, Houston 3; Montreal 5, NY Mets 1; Colorado 11, Arizona 7; Los Angeles 4, San Diego 3. *AFP*

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ASIAN GAMES HITCHES

RP athletes' billeting transferred

BUSAN—After a smooth three-hour, 15-minute flight from Manila to this scenic port city, the first batch of Filipino athletes and officials quickly realized that organizers of the 14th Asian Games set Sept. 29 to Oct. 14 have yet to iron out a lot of preparation kinks.

Without any advice, the Philippine delegation's billeting at the glistening new Athletes' Village was transferred from Building 116 to 103, necessitating the drafting of new rooming assignments and, for more than 30 minutes, literally leaving the Filipinos out in the cold.

"The (building) manager explained that 116 was not yet finished so the organizers decided to move us," said chief of mission Tom Carrasco. "That's OK except that we were not informed (of the transfer) and they did not send us the new building plan to guide us in preparing the room assignments."

Under the previous arrangement finalized during Carrasco's meeting last July, the RP contingent was to occupy the whole building (116). Now the Filipinos have to share Building 103 with the Sri Lanka delegation, which was given 22 six-athlete units.

Feeling cold (in the Baguio-like weather) and hungry upon their arrival at the Athletes' Village at 7:30 p.m. (6:30 p.m. in Manila), the Filipinos suffered a second setback when organizers failed to provide dinner which Philippine Olympic Committee's Carlos Santos-Viola had arranged with them even before leaving Manila.

"They (organizers) asked me if I want them to prepare a special meal because the dining hall would be fully operational only on Monday (Sept. 23). I told them yes, knowing we'd be flying in at dinnertime. It turns out now there's no food," Santos-Viola lamented.

Only pizza pie was available for delivery, so the Filipinos had no choice. By the time the pizzas came, it was already 12 midnight.

"Obviously," Carrasco noted," part of our initial difficulties could be due to communication problems." With this in mind, Carrasco succeeded yesterday in getting an extra man who will work with the RP Secretariat staff and other interpreters already provided by organizers.

Hopefully, there would be no more problems when the full 327-man RP contingent finally settles in at the Village, which will host about 10,000 guests, including 6,714 athletes.

BATTLE OF BIG MEN VAL HANDUMON

Selecta-RP's Asi Taulava throws a semi-hook off Qatar's Husam Isamel during their exhibition game Sunday night at the Araneta Coliseum. Selecta-RP won, 78-61.

De Vega, other sports greats get incentives

PRESIDENT Arroyo called on the sporting community to start building a stronger foundation for the future of Philippine sports on Sunday as she gave members of the RP contingent a final boost before they leave for the 14th Asian Games in Busan, South Korea.

The Chief Executive, represented by Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain, released the second and last part of the Athletes Incentives Act (R.A. 9064) to 28 retired athletes, whose past exploits are being emulated by the new batch of athletes doing battle in the Sept. 29-Oct. 14 Games.

The retired athletes, including former athletics greats Mona Sulaiman and Lydia De Vega-Mercado and boxing champions Anthony Villanueva and brothers Roel and Mansueto Velasco, received theirs checks from Buhain at the end of the 17-day nationwide torch relay at the Quirino Grandstand.

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Prayer offering for Filipino bets

COTABATO CITY—For the first time in the 12-year history of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), employees and officials offered prayers and best wishes for the members of the Philippine team who will see action in the Asian Games later this month.

Sec. Abdulrahim Imao Al Haj of the ARMM's interior and local government led some 1,000 ARMM officials and employees in the region's 1st Torch Relay and Fun Run in support of the RP delegation in the Asian Games.

"We have asked Allah (peace be upon Him) to give our athletes the needed strength, dedication and power for our beloved country," Imao told the INQUIRER.

Accompanying Imao were ARMM Vice Gov. Mahid Mutilan, ARMM police deputy director Senior Supt. Ismael Daulog and other ARMM officials. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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MMDA: Anyone can remove obstructions

By Leila B. Salaverria

ANNOYED by obstructions on the sidewalk? Remove them.

The advise came from Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando.

"(Obstructions) are a nuisance per se," Fernando yesterday said in Filipino. "Anyone can remove it. It's dangerous."

The MMDA chair also urged people to follow the law and remove signboards, posts, flower boxes and protruding walls on sidewalks that hamper the flow of pedestrian traffic, even as he promised more demolitions to come.

He said he welcomes the complaints of affected establishment owners because anger is a good sign that the MMDA's campaign is working.

"It would be better if a lot of people would be angry," Fernando told reporters yesterday as he led clearing operations on Edsa in Pasay City. "If there are only a few (who are angry), then it means the MMDA's campaign is not working. In the end more people will appreciate it."

He said the operations show that the MMDA is not singling out sidewalk vendors. Even before the campaign against vendors, the MMDA has been removing illegal obstructions, he added.

MMDA workers used the agency's newly acquired mobile shop which contains all the demolition equipment they need. The workers removed signboards, a metal post, concrete stubs and a barangay outpost from Pasay sidewalks. Even nails and staple wires on posts were removed, as pedestrians could get snagged on them.

Fernando said everything that could hamper pedestrian flow has to be removed.

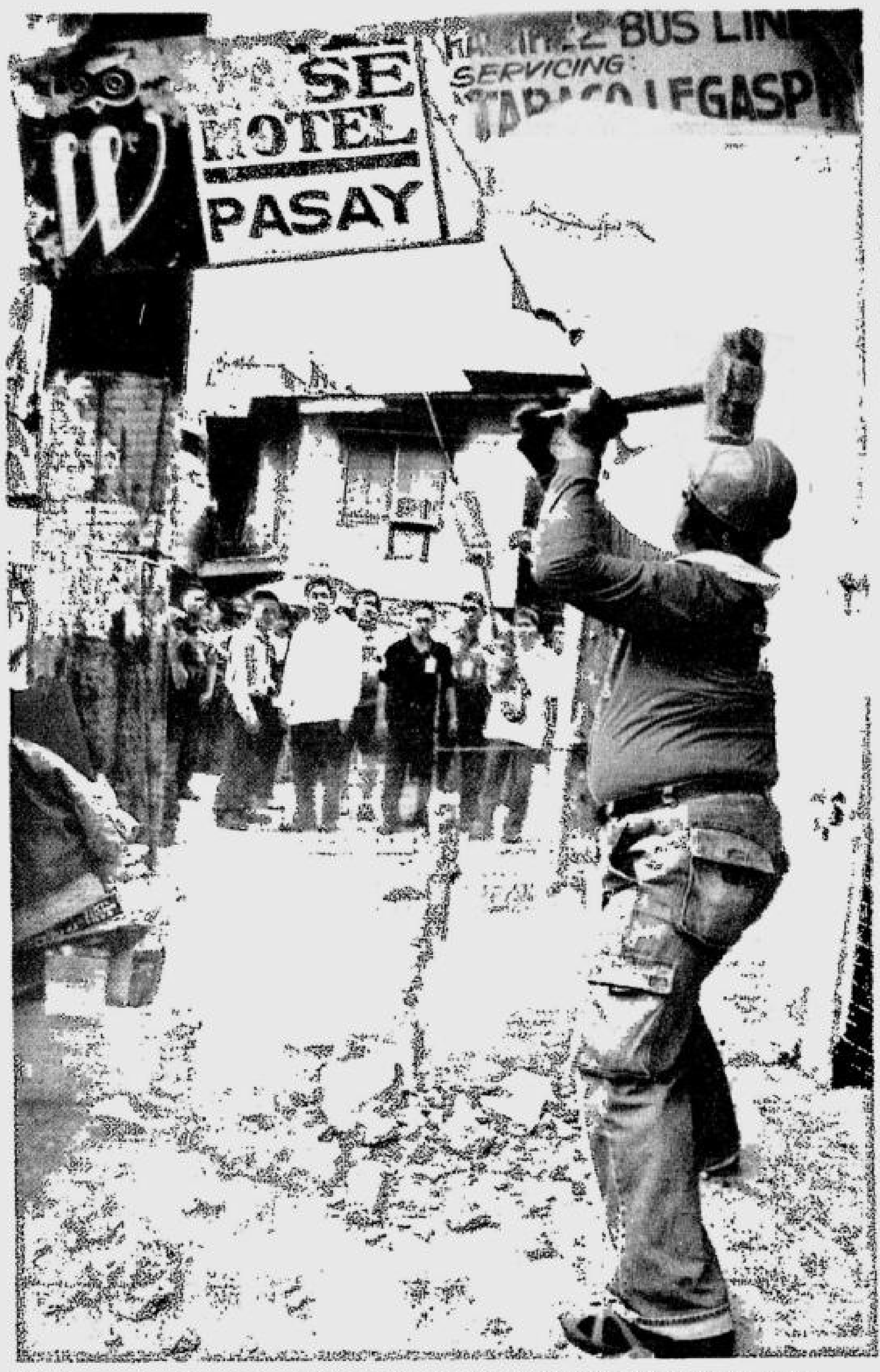
The owners of the demolished structures were given a month's notice, but some simply refused to comply. Some of those removed yesterday had red MMDA flyers posted on them, identifying them as obstructions.

"We'll have more of this," the MMDA chair said, referring to the clearing operation. "We need to return so that people will realize that they are wasting their money if they keep on putting obstructions that would later be demolished."

He said he hopes people will have the mindset that sidewalks are sacred space.

He said about P1 million a day is spent for the MMDA clearing operations.

Militant and urban poor groups have taken to the streets to denounce what they called Fernando's inhumane acts in dealing with sidewalk vendors. They called the MMDA chair "anti-poor" and "Hitler-like."



WALL comes tumbling down as Fernando (background) supervises dismantling of illegal obstructions on sidewalks.

ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Laguna coed slain

CALAMBA CITY—A female student was found battered and dead here on Saturday but police said they found no sign that she was a victim of hazing.

SP04 Filipina Manaig of the Calamba City Police Investigation Office said Liezel Palma, 18, of Sitio Kapayapaan, Canlubang, had just come from her physical education class at the Laguna College of Business and Arts (LCBA) when she went to the third floor of the school building alone at about 9:45 a.m. Saturday.

Palma was a first year student of Information Technology.

Manaig said that at about 11 a.m., other students found Palma's body in an empty room.

Palma's face was swollen and her neck was broken, police said.

Her money and jewelry were intact, but her cell phone was missing, police said.

The victim was brought to the nearby Calamba Medical Center, where doctors declared her dead, police said.

Manaig said her office is still waiting for the result of the autopsy.

But the family of the victim suspects that she could have died due to hazing. The victim was applying for membership in an unidentified sorority, the INQUIRER learned.

The Palma family's suspicion, according to a local radio report, was triggered by the discovery of bruises and contusions all over the girl's body and her broken neck.

Manaig said Palma had indeed been applying for membership in the sorority. But she added that police investigation did not find any indication that the girl's death was a result of hazing.

Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Phone owner stabbed in SM theater

By Alcuin Papa

A 23-YEAR-OLD man was stabbed when he tried to resist a cell phone robber inside a moviehouse at the SM City North Edsa mall in Quezon City last Sunday.

Allan Jerne, of Tatalon, Quezon City, is being treated at the Sioson Hospital for a stab wound in the left side of the body, police said.

Suspect Rene Ingaun, 19, of Project 7, Quezon City, was arrested right after the 3:30 p.m. stabbing and is now detained at the Baler police station.

Police said Jerne was sending text messages on his Nokia 3310 inside the moviehouse when Ingaun sat beside him. After a few minutes, Ingaun poked a knife at Jerne and told him to hand over his cell phone.

But Jerne resisted. Ingaun stabbed him during the scuffle, police said.

The commotion drew the attention of the theater security guards who grabbed Ingaun.

QC Internet café owner shot dead

By Alcuin Papa

WAS IT a love affair gone sour, a kidnapping or a simple case of robbery?

Policemen are looking into these angles in investigating the killing of Jonnel Mendiola, 30, in Quezon City Sunday night.

Mendiola, owner of an Internet cafe and resident of Loyola Heights, Quezon City, was shot dead when he tried to resist his abductors, police said.

Policemen have caught the two suspects, who are now undergoing treatment at the East Avenue Medical Center. They are Gregorio Lazaro, 40, of Bulacan, and Mariano Domingo, 32, of Manila.

A police report said Mendiola had just dropped off his girlfriend Jamie Liu at her house in Loyola Heights at about 10:30 p.m. Sunday, when the woman heard a gunshot outside. She told police she saw Mendiola's Kia van (UPV-365) speeding away, with Mendiola and two men on board.

Fearing something bad was happening, Liu called the police.

A shootout allegedly broke out when a police mobile unit caught up with the van at the corner of V. Luna and East Avenue. When the smoke cleared, the suspects lay wounded in the van, police said.

The patrolmen also found Mendiola's body in the van with two gunshot wounds in the body and lacerations on the face, which indicated that he tried to fight off the suspects before they shot him, police said.

Ex-newsman's killer identified, hunted

By Philip C. Tubeza

MANILA policemen are hunting down the killer of former People's Journal photographer Perry Baluyot whom one witness described yesterday.

Police identified the killer as Upao Makabenta. The witness described him as 22 to 25 years old, dark, and 5-foot-7 tall, said Detective Alfredo Salazar of the Western Police District homicide section.

Makabenta stabbed dead Baluyot, 42, of Port Area, Manila, on Saturday afternoon, Salazar said.

He said police already have two witnesses, one of whom was talking with Baluyot when he was stabbed at about 2:30 p.m. on 12th Street, near the corner of Atlanta Street, in Port Area.

The two men were talking in front of the house of barangay chair Ibrahim Macalanta when Makabenta came

The witness said Baluyot and Makabenta exchanged dagger looks just minutes before the stabbing.

The witness quoted Makabenta as telling Baluyot: "*Wag kang praning sa akin*. I have also been through that, even when I was still in Davao."

Makabenta later stabbed Baluyot with a double-bladed knife in the back and then hurriedly left, according to the witness.

Baluyot was declared dead on arrival at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital in Tondo.

Salazar said the suspect arrived in Manila five months ago from the province.

Makabenta had allegedly fled to Manila because he was wanted in Davao, also for a killing, police learned.

Baluyot was one of many employees laid off by People's Journal two years ago.

Diño beaten up

By Alcuin Papa

THE MAN who helped the daughter-victim of executed rapist Leo Echegaray was beaten up by his younger brother, a suspected drug user, in Quezon City Sunday night.

Barangay Captain Martin Diño, 45, was beaten up in his house on Captain Diño Street in Barangay San Antonio, San Francisco del Monte, at about 10:30 p.m., a police report said.

It said Diño went home to confront his younger brother Simplicio for allegedly selling illegal drugs in the neighborhood.

At home, Diño allegedly caught Simplicio having a drug session with other drug users.

Diño reportedly got upset and tried to bring Simplicio to the nearest police station. But Simplicio resisted and hit Diño with a lead pipe, the report said.

Arrogant Chinese envoy meets his match

THE ARROGANT Chinese ambassador, Wang Chunqui, had it coming to him when Justice Secretary Hernando Perez demanded that he be declared persona non grata.

It was the first time a top government official requested the expulsion of a foreign ambassador for arrogance in dealing with the government.

Perez claims the Chinese envoy tried to bully him by pounding on his table to demand the release of 122 detained Chinese fishermen caught fishing in Philippine waters.

* * *

But Perez couldn't do what Ambassador Wang was demanding without violating the due process of law. The Chinese fishermen have to be charged in court and they have to plead guilty and pay corresponding fines before they could be released.

Wang wanted the due process dispensed with for the immediate release of his compatriots.

For not respecting our justice system, the Chinese ambassador should be expelled.

* * *

Perez had shown foreign governments that our country, no matter how poverty-stricken and puny in size, has dignity and self-respect.

If Perez allowed himself to be bullied by the Chinese ambassador, other diplomats could do the same to our government officials.

Ambassador Wang didn't reckon with the machismo of a Batangueño.

* * *

That's why I was surprised to read a story in some tabloids that I "went wild" at the office of the justice secretary. Supposedly, I was pressuring Perez to rule in favor of my friend, Zamboanga City businessman Lepeng Wee, who was charged with smuggling toxic chemicals into the country through the Zamboanga port.

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

When did I do that? How did I do that without an instant rebuke from Perez?

If the justice secretary did not let the Chinese ambassador's arrogance pass, how could he have tolerated my supposed arrogance in his office?

* * *

The report in the tabloids about my "going wild" at Perez's office was made the basis of unsavory commentaries about me on several radio stations.

The radio commentators never gave me a call to ask whether the report in the tabloids was true. They just fired away without getting my side.

Not that I care. I can take what I dish out. I don't cry for myself, I cry for some people who have the nerve to consider themselves "journalists."

* * *

On Sept. 5, this corner featured the billboard structures on the railroad tracks in Metro Manila because most of them pose a hazard to life and limb. One such structure, in the Nichols area between Edsa and the FTI compound, fell on some squatter shanties during heavy monsoon rains recently.

I asked who owned those billboards.

Here's a reaction from the Dionisio D. Ramos, manager of the Philippine National Railways' legal department:

"Regarding your query, those billboard structures are owned by Mr. Renato R. So and/or Railmaster Forwarding System who in truth and in fact have no authority from the PNR to put up such advertising structures. They were illegally set up under the false pretense that PNR has purportedly authorized their construction."

So, why don't you dismantle all those dangerous structures? It's as simple as that.

* * *

The TV show that promises its viewers they could become "instant millionaire" should be renamed "Who Wants to be a Sucker?"

The game show has made suckers of winners. Winners are made to wait for months after the show date to get their prize.

One winner from the province stayed at a luxurious hotel in Manila while waiting for his P100,000 prize to be handed to him. When he checked out of the hotel to go home, he had yet to get his prize.

* * *

Another winner treated his friends to a drinking bash. He spent a lot for the blowout, but the prize money never came.

Viva Productions, producer of the game show, gives the winners the runaround. It tells the winners to go to its accounting office. But the accounting office does not honor the claim card.

Why doesn't Viva just scrap the show if it can't pay the winning participants?

* * *

Here's a note I received from a reader:

"I would like to call the attention of the towing contractor of the PNCC (Philippine National Construction Corp.) in Sector 1 of the South Luzon Expressway, namely Acer, which is operated by a certain Delfin Almeda. It is to our knowledge that this sector was awarded to him (Almeda) as a towing contractor without the proper pre-qualification in the technical and financial aspect as per PNCC guidelines."

Paging PNCC president Louie Sison.

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THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta
MALL CINEPLEX 7
tel 911.3101 loc. 821/8242/8400
1 JOLOGS
2 LAMAN
3 (DOLBY DIGITAL) ROAD TO PERDITION
4 (SDDS) REIGN OF FIRE
5 (DTS) VOODOO
6 BOURNE IDENTITY
7 VAN WILDER

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2 REIGN OF FIRE

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1 BIGLANG LIKO
2 DERAILED
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2 (DTS) ROOKIE
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4 DERAILED

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3 BOURNE IDENTITY
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2 SIGNS
3 (DOLBY) HIGH RISK
4 (DTS) SPIRIT

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 AUSTIN POWER
2 HIGH RISK
3 BAKAT

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1
2 KAMA SUTRA
3 STRIP SHOW
4 LEFT BEHIND THE MOVIE

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2 DIVINE SECRETS
3 (DTS) DERAILED
4 INSOMNIA
5 LAMAN

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1 LAMAN
2 DERAILED
3 SAGAD

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 DERAILED
3 SAGAD

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3233
1 LAMAN
2 DERAILED
3 INSOMNIA
4 BOURNE IDENTITY

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) LAMAN
2 (DTS)

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 LAMAN
2 SIGNS
3 MORE ANTS IN THE PANTS

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LAMAN
2 DIVINE SECRETS..
3 BOURNE IDENTITY
4 HIGH RISK

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2 LAMAN
3 (DTS) REIGN OF FIRE
4 SIMONE

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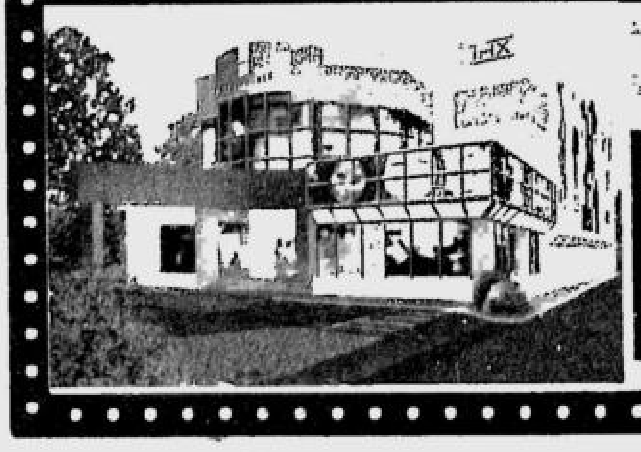

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5 REVELATION
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7 TUKAAN
8 VAN WILDER

SM CENTERPOINT
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1 VAN WILDER
2 TUKAAN
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 SIMONE
5 REIGN OF FIRE
6 SIGNS
7 REVELATION
8 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
9 JOLOGS
10 VOODOO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 SIGNS
2 BOURNE IDENTITY
3 JOLOGS
4 ROAD TO PERDITION
5 VAN WILDER
6 VOODOO
7 REIGN OF FIRE
8 REVELATION
9 TRIPLE X
10 HIGH RISK
11 LAMAN
12 TUKAAN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 REVELATION
3 SIGNS
4 VAN WILDER
5 BOURNE IDENTITY
6 REIGN OF FIRE
7 VOODOO
8 LEFT BEHIND
9 JOLOGS
10 HIGH RISK
11 SIMONE
12 TUKAAN

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401
1 SIMONE
2 VAN WILDER
3 REVELATION
4 ROAD TO PERDITION
5 SIGNS
6 SPIDER
7 VOODOO
8 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
9 JOLOGS
10 REIGN OF FIRE
11 TUKAAN
12 HIGH RISK

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452
1 REVELATION
2 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
3 TUKAAN
4 JOLOGS
5 VAN WILDER
6 VOODOO
7 ROAD TO PERDITION
8 REIGN OF FIRE

SM SOUTHMALL
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1 VOODOO
2 SIMONE
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 VAN WILDER
5 REVELATION
6 JOLOGS
7 LEFT BEHIND
8 REIGN OF FIRE
9 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
10 TUKAAN

SM CITY CEBU
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1 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
2 AUSTIN POWERS
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 INSOMNIA
5 HUMAN EATER
6 DERAILED
7 SIGNS
8 HIGH RISK

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422
1 BAKAT
2 CLOSED
3 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
4 DERAILED
5 SIGNS
6 AUSTIN POWERS
7 CLOSED
8 HUMAN EATER

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 ROAD TO PERDITION
3 SEX & ZEN
4 TUKAAN
5 SIMONE
6 JOLOGS

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 TUKAAN
2 REIGN OF FIRE
3 ROAD TO PERDITION
4 VAN WILDER

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
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1 ROAD TO PERDITION
2 TUKAAN
3 REIGN OF FIRE
4 JOLOGS

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998
1 AUSTIN POWERS
2 DERAILED
3 THE BOURNE IDENTITY
4 BAKAT
5 HIGH RISK
6 SIGNS

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633-8976
1 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2 ROAD TO PERDITION
11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:00/4:15/6:30/8:45/
10:40 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:55 END

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3 SIGNS
4 VOODOO
5 ROAD TO PERDITION
6 REIGN OF FIRE
7 BOURNE IDENTITY
8 KWENTONG KAYUMANGGI ANIMATION FESTIVAL
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5 VOODOO
6 SIMONE
7 VAN WILDER

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3 VAN WILDER
4 BOURNE IDENTITY
5 VOODOO
6 SIMONE
7 ROAD TO PERDITION
8 JOLOGS

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1 REIGN OF FIRE
2 BOURNE IDENTITY
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5 VAN WILDER
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7 VOODOO
8 REVELATION

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2 REVELATION
3 VAN WILDER
4 ROAD TO PERDITION
5 VOODOO
6 TUKAAN

Bacolod 441- 0453 / 0459
1 AUSTIN POWERS 3
2 UNFAITHFUL
3 SIGNS
4 LAMAN
5 MORE ANTS IN THE PANTS
6 SEX & ZEN

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2 SIGNS
3 HIGH EXPLOSIVE
4 DERAILED
5 BAKAT
6 BOURNE IDENTITY

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5 TUKAAN
6 ROAD TO PERDITION

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News and views still don't mix on TV

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

A COUPLE of years ago, a TV network tried to combine news and views on its nightly newscast with its news anchor not just reporting the day's events, but also commenting on some of them.

Concerned viewers, including this writer, objected to the gambit, pointing out that news reporting has to be scrupulously objective, so that viewers can get the reliable and unbiased information they need to come to their own conclusions.

This was a controversial issue, but logic and objectivity won out in the end, and the "news and views" combination was dropped.

These days, however, we see the same unwieldy mix being attempted on TV anew, this time on some morning newscasts. Once again, the news anchors report the news, then ass their own observations and reactions to some of the items.

Once more, we must urge our TV people *not* to go in this subjective direction.

Perhaps the people behind such shows think that it's ok to be subjective, because the morning programs are so relaxed and easygoing. But news reportage is news reportage, whatever the "mood," and must be done objectively.

When news is mixed up with views, the information gets garbled, and some listeners have a hard time figuring out which is fact, and which is conjecture or opinion. This gets in the way of their appreciation of the significance of the news event, and the entire news-dissemination process is thrown out of the whack.

So, news anchors, please keep up your own opinions to yourselves, and grant upon your viewers their right to come up with theirs, *on their own*. They deserve nothing less.

Romantic films on Cinema One

ON Sept. 28 at 6 p.m., Cinema One screens "May Minamahal" with **Aiko Melendez** and **Aga Muhlach**.

On Oct. 5, **Maricel Soriano** and **Vic Sotto** topbill "Ang Tange Kong Pag-ibig."

On Oct. 12 "Kay Tagal Kang Hinintay" stars **Judy Ann Santos** and **Rico Yan**.

On Oct. 19 "My Funny Valentine" topbills **Kris Aquino** and **Vic Sotto**.

Finally, on Oct. 26, "Mula sa Puso, The Movie" stars **Claudine Barretto, Rico Yan** and **Diether Ocampo**.

Philip Lazaro in Davao

SINGER-comedian **Philip Lazaro** headlined the "larger than Laff" show, which will be presented by The Venue in Davao City on Sept. 28. Philip occasionally guests on TV and performs frequently on the comedy club circuit.

African stories

AT 8 p.m. on Sept. 28 on the National Geographic Channel, "Africa: Savannah Homecoming" is about **Alice**, an expectant mother who is determined to make it back to her hometown in time for her baby's birth, and **Flora**, who faces a heart-wrenching choice between country and city, the life she's created and the life she left behind.

At 9 p.m., " Africa: Love in Sahel" traces the epic journey of a young man who struggles to keep his cattle healthy and prove himself to his family and community. The journey is a rite of passage that must be undertaken as a traditional transition from boyhood to manhood.

'Global Challenges'

Whether using the Internet for Medical diagnosis in Rural India or selling local handicrafts online in Guyana, technology has a huge part to play in empowering people around the world. This is the basis for CNN's new weekly series at 10 p.m. Philippine time on Sunday, starting on Oct. 13.

The series travels the world to bring reports on the environment, communication education, health poverty and agriculture and how science and technology help to improve the quality of people's lives.

The first program visits El Limou, a small village in the Dominican Republic, where villagers built a small hydroelectric power station that has brought electricity to their homes for the first time.

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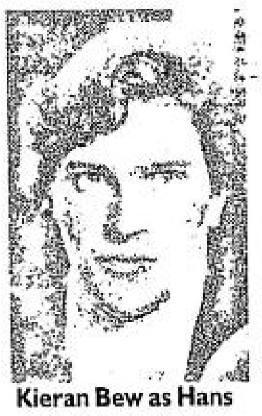
ROAD TO PERDITION **P13** 1:25,4:00, 6:35,9:10	**VAN WILDER** **P13** 12:55,3:05,5:15, 7:25,9:35	**SIMONE** **P13** 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50
REIGN OF FIRE **P13** 11:50,1:50,3:50, 5:50,7:55,10:00	**BOURNE IDENTITY** **P13** 12:00,2:20,4:40, 7:10,9:40	**ROAD TO PERDITION** **P13** 12:10,2:35,5:00, 7:35,10:10

MATINEE P80.00 - FREE SEATING - SCREENINGS BEFORE 5 PM - MON. TO FRI.

Hallmark Channel airs fairy tale about Hans Christian Andersen



Kieran Bew as Hans Christian Andersen.

HALLMARK Channel presents the concluding part of "My Life as A Fairy Tale," the story of of Hans Christian Andersen, creator of more than 100 well-loved stories that captured every child's and every child-at-heart's imagination.

Hallmark Channel takes artistic liberty in presenting the life of "the world's most magical storyteller" in a dreamlike mode from boyhood to maturity, following the temper of the tales he so wonderfully spun.

"Hans Christian Andersen: My Life as A Fairy Tale" stars Simon Callow ("Shakespeare in Love") as Charles Dickens, Geraldine James ("Gandhi"), Allison Steadman ("Topsy-Turvy") and newcomer Kieran Bew in a stunning debut as Hans Christian Andersen.

Hallmark Channel airs through Destiny Cable Channel 25, Home Cable Channel 49 and Sky Cable Channel 38.

'Utang ni Tatang' at CCP

IN celebration of its 33rd anniversary, the Cultural Center of the Philippines presents "Utang ni Tatang," the director's cut. Written and directed by indie filmmaker Jon Red and produced by World Arts Cinema, the experimental movie is a dark comedy about a gang getting back together to collect a debt from their former boss. After 10 years, is it worth it?

Red's initial venture into the mainstream stars Joel Torre, Jeffrey Quizon, Ronnie Lazaro, Maricar de Mesa, Precious Valencia, Dodos dela Cruz, Tado and Jaime Fabregas. The film won for best cinematography (Larry Manda) and best production design (Bonna Fajardo) in the Manila Film Festival last June.

The special screening is scheduled Saturday, Sept. 28, 7 p.m. at the CCP Little Theater.

Admission is free. For inquiries, call 832-1125.

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P 13
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P 13
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"DIZZY WITH A ROMANTIC SPIRIT THAT'S BEEN MISSING FROM CINEMAS FOREVER."
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Directed by Wong Kar Wai
Starring Maggie Cheung & Tony Leung
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
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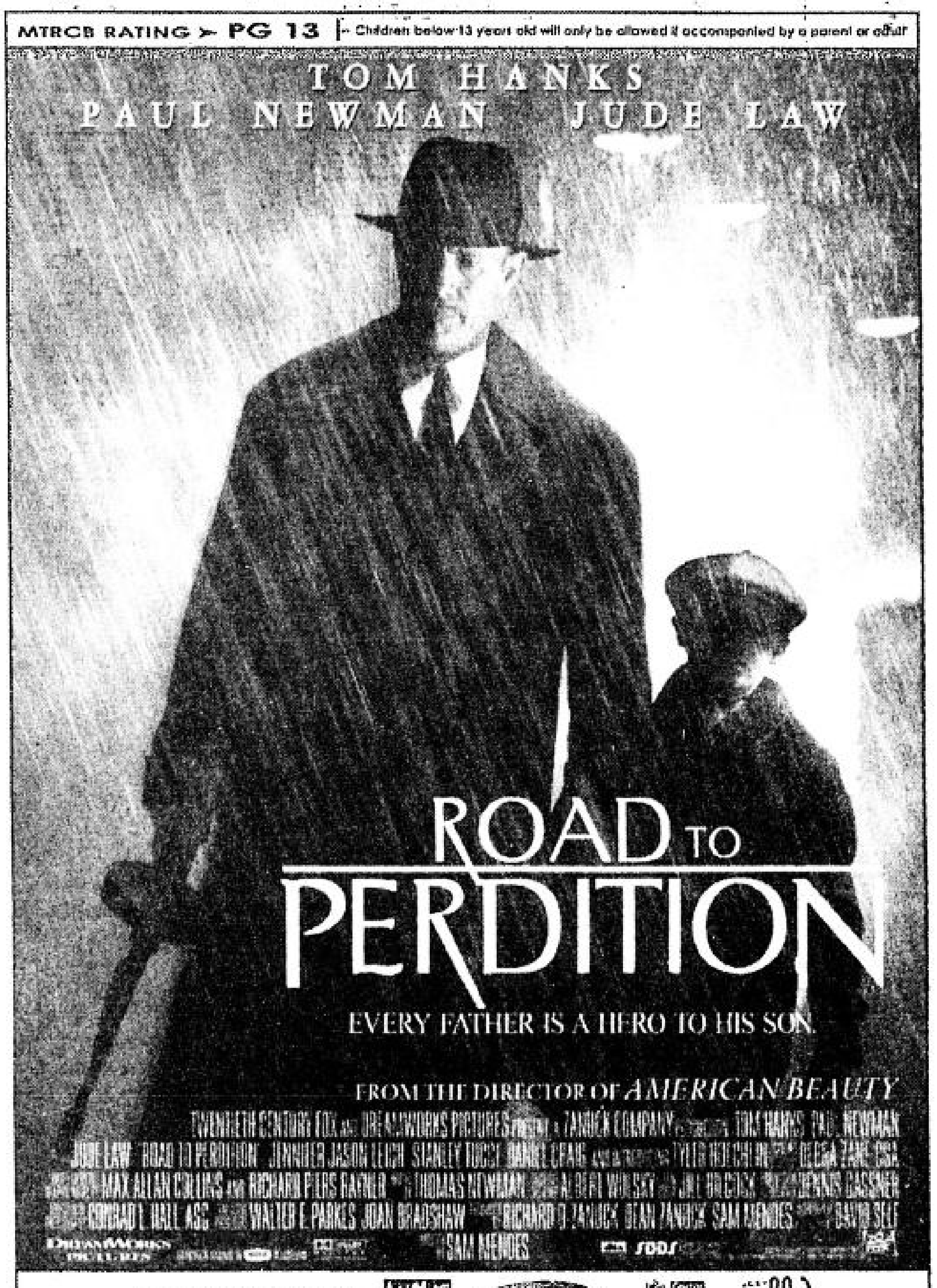
The 4th Israeli Film Festival
AYALA CINEMAS

	Sept.19 (Thu)	**Sept.20 (Fri)**
	Clean Sweep 2:00	The Policeman 11:30
	Kippur 4:30	Don't Give a Damn 2:00
	Growing Pains 7:00	Growing Pains 4:30
	The Policeman 9:30	Total Love 7:00
		Yana's Friends 9:30
	Sept.21 (Sat)	**Sept.22 (Sun)**
	Growing Pains 11:30	Total Love 11:30
	Yana's Friends 2:00	The Policeman 2:00
	Clean Sweep 4:30	Yana's Friends 4:30
	Kippur 7:00	Don't Give a Damn 7:00
	Clean Sweep 9:30	Clean Sweep 9:30
Sept.23 (Mon)	**Sept. 24 (Tue.)**	**Sept.25 (Wed)**
Total Love 2:30	Growing Pains 2:30	Kippur 2:30
Don't Give a Damn 4:30	Yana's Friends 4:30	Don't Give a Damn 4:30
The Policeman 7:00	Clean Sweep 7:00	Total Love 7:00
Kippur 9:30	Don't Give A Damn 9:30	Yana's Friends 9:30

MTRCB RATING ➢ PG 13 | - Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



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Stephen Holden, THE NEW YORK TIMES
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Mick LaSalle, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE
JENNIFER LOPEZ
ENOUGH
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J. Lo strikes back in 'ENOUGH'
Slim (JENNIFER LOPEZ) is working hard as a waitress when she is swept off her feet by Mitch (BILLY CAMPBELL), a handsome, rich businessman. Convinced she's found her Prince Charming, Slim marries Mitch in a lavish wedding, and settles with him in a fabulous dream home, where they are soon blessed with a lovely daughter, Gracie (TESSA ALLEN).
But the dream turns into a nightmare when Mitch becomes unfaithful, and starts abusing her physically and emotionally. He expects her to accept his beating and cheating. "I'm the man," Slim's husband declares. "I work and bring home the money, so I make the rules."
Slim has had enough. With her friend Ginny's (JULIETTE LEWIS) help, she escapes with Gracie. Pursued by an increasingly dangerous husband, she prepares to fight back with all her might.
AN ENTERTAINING, MUST-SEE THRILLER!
*Parents strongly cautioned. Some scenes may be inappropriate for children under 13.

AYALA CINEMAS
SAME FAMILY
09. 25. 02
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
SKYFILMS

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

'Friends,' Aniston win first Emmys

ALL FOR "FRIENDS"—Stars (from left) David Schwimmer, Lisa Kudrow, Matthew Perry, Courtney Cox-Arquette, Jennifer Aniston and Matt LeBlanc with their Emmy for oustanding comedy series.

LOS ANGELES—The White House drama "The West Wing" won its third consecutive Emmy as best TV drama series, while "Friends" was honored as best comedy for the first time in its eight years on the air.

"I'm just as surprised as you are," Aaron Sorkin, creator of "The West Wing," said in accepting the Emmy at Sunday night's awards ceremony.

The show also produced acting Emmy winners in Allison Janney, John Spencer and Stockard Channing.

In comedy, the Emmys loved "Everybody Loves Raymond," with acting awards going to Ray Romano, Brad Garrett and Doris Roberts.

But "Friends," entering what is expected to be its final season as the most popular comedy on TV, won best series.

Jennifer Aniston, with adoring husband Brad Pitt looking on, won best actress, the ensemble's first major acting award.

"This is so amazing, after eight years and the last three hours and 10 minutes. This is so worth the wait," said David Crane, executive producer of "Friends."

In a year when some critics thought edgy fare would win, only Michael Chiklis' best actor award for FX's "The Shield," broke the mold. HBO's undertaker drama, "Six Feet Under," earned 23 nominations but was nearly shut out, with one directing award.

Janney, who plays the president's press secretary in "The West Wing," won the best actress Emmy after winning the past two years as supporting actress in the same role.

"No way. Thank you to the Emmy voters for this promotion," said Janney.

Spencer, who plays the chief of staff, and Channing, who plays the first lady, won the drama series supporting acting Emmys.

When Romano won, he referred to an earlier comment that his parents said they would visit him each year during the Emmys until he won.

"Mom and dad, we're going right to the airport . . . I'm kidding, of course. This is only special because you're here tonight," he said as he accepted the award for outstanding lead actor in a comedy series.

Garrett, who plays Romano's brother, and Roberts, who plays Romano's meddling mother, both joked about their awards.

The 71-year-old Roberts said, "This is what happens when you're young and sexy."

Deadpanned Garrett: "I just hope that this award breaks down the door for Jewish people who are trying to get into show business."

A puckish Larry Wilmore won the award for best writing in a comedy series for "Bernie Mac."

"I feel like Halle Berry," the black writer said, mimicking Berry's weepy Oscar acceptance speech earlier this year.

Host Conan O'Brien opened the show with dubious help from rocker Ozzy Osbourne and his family, who joined in a skit in which they dressed O'Brien in outrageous Osbourne fashion and rushed him to the awards, only to mistakenly put him on the set of "The Price is Right" instead of the Shrine Auditorium.

MTV's "The Osbournes" received the best reality series Emmy at an earlier ceremony. The family, who gathered onstage as presenters, let mom Sharon Osbourne do the talking.

"On a personal note, I want to thank you all for your prayers and encouragement. It means a lot to me," she said. Mrs. Osbourne is undergoing treatment for colon cancer.

Sunday's event contrasted with last year's somber, post-Sept. 11 ceremony, when participants dressed down. The fashion parade of arriving stars showed that glamour and revealing gowns were back this year.

"The Sopranos" was ineligible for awards because it sat out a season, but it managed to have an impact: A new episode of the mob family drama aired Sunday on HBO in competition with the Emmys, and O'Brien joked at one point that he would turn the numerous TV sets that decorated the stage to "The Sopranos."

"Late Show with David Letterman" was honored for the fifth year in a row as outstanding variety, music or comedy series.

The award for individual performance in a variety or music program went to "Sting in Tuscany . . . All This Time."

"The Gathering Storm" was named best TV movie and Albert Finney was honored as best lead actor in a miniseries or movie for his portrayal of Winston Churchill. It also won a writing Emmy.

Laura Linney was named best lead actress in a miniseries or movie for "Wild Iris."

In the same category, Michael Moriarty was honored as supporting actor for "James Dean," and Channing, winning her second award of the night, won best supporting actress for "The Matthew Shepard Story."

"Band of Brothers," a sweeping World War II epic, was honored as best miniseries.

HBO and NBC dominated the Emmys, each receiving 24 awards including honors given during the earlier creative arts ceremony.

CBS was second with eight awards, followed by Fox with seven, A&E with six and ABC with five.

Talk show host Oprah Winfrey received the inaugural Bob Hope Humanitarian Award, honoring philanthropic efforts, from presenter Tom Hanks. Comedian Hope spent decades entertaining US troops.

"There really is nothing more important to me than striving to be a good human being," Winfrey said, acknowledging Hope, 99, and his wife watching at home.

ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC were honored with the Governors Award for jointly supporting a post-Sept. 11 telethon, "America: A Tribute to Heroes." The program also received an Emmy for variety, music or comedy special.

"Thank you on behalf of a very grateful America," said former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

AP

"BAND OF BROTHERS." Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks hold their awards for outstanding mini-series or movie.

JENNIFER'S FIRST. "Friends" star Aniston clutches her trophy for outstanding lead actress in a comedy series.

ALLISON'S SURPRISE. Outstanding lead actress in a drama series, Allison Janney, for "The West Wing."

EVERYBODY LOVES RAY. Ray Romano is outstanding lead actor in a comedy series for "Everybody Loves Raymond."

CHIKLIS' SHIELD. Michael Chiklis kisses his Emmy for outstanding actor in a drama series for "The Shield."

LIST OF WINNERS

Drama Series: "The West Wing," NBC.

Comedy Series: "Friends," NBC.

Variety, Music or Comedy Series: "Late Show With David Letterman," CBS.

Miniseries: "Band of Brothers," HBO.

Made-for-TV Movie: "The Gathering Storm," HBO.

Variety, Music or Comedy Special: "America: A Tribute to Heroes," various networks.

Actor, Drama Series: Michael Chiklis, "The Shield," FX.

Actor, Comedy Series: Ray Romano, "Everybody Loves Raymond," CBS.

Actor, Miniseries or a Movie: Albert Finney, "The Gathering Storm," HBO.

Individual Performance in a Variety or Music Program: Sting, "A&E In Concert: Sting In Tuscany ... All This Time," A&E.

Actress, Drama Series: Allison Janney, "The West Wing," NBC.

Actress, Comedy Series: Jennifer Aniston, "Friends," NBC

Actress, Miniseries or a Movie: Laura Linney, "Wild Iris," Showtime.

Supporting Actor, Drama Series: John Spencer, "The West Wing," NBC.

Supporting Actor, Comedy Series: Brad Garrett, "Everybody Loves Raymond," CBS.

Supporting Actor, Miniseries or a Movie: Michael Moriarty, "James Dean," TNT.

Supporting Actress, Drama Series: Stockard Channing, "The West Wing," NBC.

Supporting Actress, Comedy Series: Doris Roberts, "Everybody Loves Raymond," CBS.

Supporting Actress, Miniseries or Movie: Stockard Channing, "The Matthew Shepard Story," NBC.

Directing for a Drama Series: "Six Feet Under: Pilot," HBO.

Directing for a Comedy Series: "Sex and the City: The Real Me," HBO.

Directing for a Miniseries, Movie or a Special: "Band of Brothers," HBO.

Directing for a Variety or Music Program: "Opening Ceremony Salt Lake 2002 Olympic Winter Games," NBC.

Writing for a Drama Series: "24: Midnight-1:00 a.m. (Pilot)," Fox.

Writing for a Comedy Series: "The Bernie Mac Show: Pilot," Fox.

Writing for a Miniseries, Movie or a Dramatic Special: "The Gathering Storm," HBO.

Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program: "Saturday Night Live," NBC.

Awards that were previously announced:

Governors Award: ABC, CBS, NBC and Fox for a program honoring Sept. 11 heroes.

Bob Hope Humanitarian Award: Oprah Winfrey.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SUGAT / FERDINANDO
ODEON	ROAD TO PERDITION
ODEON-2	JASON X / TAMPISAW
ROBEN	TUKAAN
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	STARWARS 'BIG FAT LIAR
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET-2	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
QUEZON-1	BAKAT
REMAR	TUKAAN
REMAR-2	BAKAT
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	TUKAAN
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CINE EUROPA 5
CINEMA-2	ROAD TO PERDITION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	LAMAN
CINEMA-2	TUKAAN
CINEMA-3	JOLOGS
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BOURNE IDENTITY
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	GAMITAN
CINEMA-6	XXX
CINEMA-7	YOUNG VIRGINS
CINEMA-8	SIMONE
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	REIGN OF FIRE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ROAD TO PERDITION
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	REVELATION
CINEMA-12	VOODOO
CINEMA-14	VAN WILDER
CINEMA-15	LEFT BEHIND THE MOVIE
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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BUSINESS

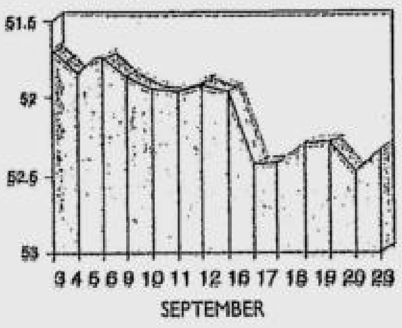
Editor Raul O. Marcelo ◎ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Narisma

Gov't maintains export target at 4%

Despite encouraging 7-month performance

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.34 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 23, 2002

¥ 123.84 = $1
As of 5 p.m., Sept. 20, 2002

GOLD: $322.30-322.80
per ounce Hong Kong, Sept. 23, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Stocks end lower on deficit woes

STOCKS fell for the fourth straight day yesterday, led by Bank of the Philippine Islands , as players continued to fret over budget deficit concerns, analysts said.

The Philippine main index closed 4.24 points or 0.37 percent lower at 1,138.63 points.

"This is a continuation of last week's technical correction. The index's next support is at 1,127 points. There are concerns on the country's budget deficit, which is causing volatility in foreign exchange," said Henry Ong, vice president for sales at KGI Securities.

Last week, the national government reported that the budget deficit had already reached P144 billion in the first eight months of the year, exceeding the full-year target of P130 billion.

But Ong said the market could soon stage a technical rally as the thin trading volume indicated an easing in selling pressure.

Value turnover thinned at P175.43 million from Friday's P6.924 billion which was boosted by cross sales worth P6.7 billion.

Decliners clobbered gainers 27 to nine and there were 40 stocks unchanged. *Reuters*

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

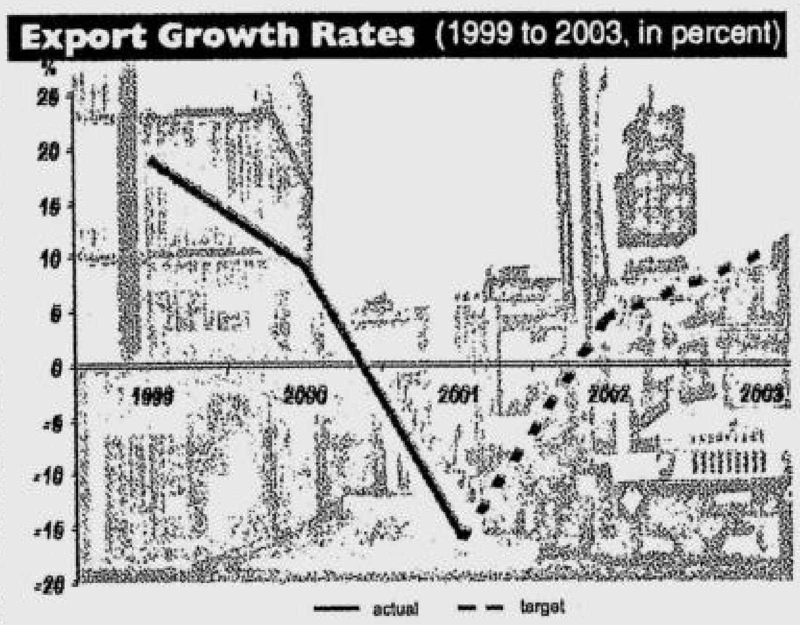
FACTORY managers' fears of impending US military action against Iraq may actually help the Philippines attain, if not surpass, its 4-percent export target for the year, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II said yesterday.

Roxas said companies were "stacking up their inventories to hedge against inflationary pressures being brought about by a number of factors, among them the escalating tension between Iraq and the US and fears of oil price increases."

He said demand had increased for digital signal processors, the Philippines' main semiconductor product.

Roxas said the 6.9-percent growth in exports in the first seven months was "very encouraging" but the DTI had decided to stick to its earlier target because the "factors pushing export growth still do not appear to be sustainable." Also, the DTI is worried about a possible relapse in the US economy, the country's biggest export market.

Export Growth Rates (1999 to 2003, in percent)



The DTI expects exports to increase by 4 percent to $33.4 billion this year from $32.1 billion last year, which is a turnaround from the sector's 16-percent plunge last year, the sector's biggest annual decrease since 1975.

The DTI said a resurgent electronic sector was fueling the rebound in exports.

"The US economy, which accounted for 40 percent of the world GDP growth in recent years, has yet to fully recover. If it suffers a relapse, then the global, economy would be at risk again. This would also mean a slowdown in the expansion of trade and capital flows that have underpinned global integration," Roxas said.

"The Philippine economy is subject to the vagaries of the world economy," he said.

While the overall data showed positive results—exports in the first seven months rose to $19.895 billion this year from $18.852 million last year—the country's export performance has remained erratic. While microcircuits and semiconductors such as digital signal processors were up 20 percent, sales of input/output peripherals for desktop computers were down 9 percent. Machinery and transport export climbed 10.6 percent but garments exports were off 3.9 percent.

Aside from a slight recovery in electronic products, the DTI also cited significant rise in demand for Philippine exports to Asia - specifically—China, Malaysia, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore—that cushioned the impact of a slowdown in the country's Top 2 markets, United States and Japan.

Total exports to the six countries surged 30 percent to $5.379 billion during the first six months this year from $4.152.31 billion in the same period last year. The combined exports to the 6 countries accounted for an aggregate market share of 32.27 percent in the first half this year from 25.97 percent during the same period last year. *With a report from AFP*

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One-way streak

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

NOW young looking, as if by miracle, sporting hair of unusual color, and with much less old age lines on the face, is a former senator who lost last year in a bid for reelection.

We shall know him only by his famous moniker JPE, although his real name is Juan Ponce Enrile, who just recently, on the 30th anniversary of the declaration of martial rule (i.e. dictatorship), defended its leading man, starring Ferdinand Marcos.

Nowadays, JPE has a new object for target practice: Meralco, which is controlled by the Lopez family who, unlike JPE, never waltzed with the dictator.

Paying homage to his old master last Saturday, a date which happened to be Sept. 21, at the media forum called Kapihan sa Sulu, JPE said he could prove that, under martial rule, Marcos acquired Meralco from the Lopez family legally. Hmm.

Sure, boss, and Imelda Marcos hated jewelry and shoes. Come on, everything was legal during martial law, because it could be made legal on paper. Even the Constitution.

* * *

WHEN in 1986, the Marcos dictatorship fell, I did a series on the defunct Business Day on the mysterious ownership of Meralco after its takeover by the Marcos dictatorship.

I reported even then that, a year after Marcos imposed martial rule, the Lopez family was close to bankruptcy. Even Meralco would soon default on its loans.

No bank would restructure the Meralco loans, for one, much less lend new money to the Lopez family, who everybody knew then as being, er, "unloved" by the dictator.

Indeed, the Lopez family, as JPE pointed out, saying he has papers to prove it, sold out of Meralco. They had no choice. The family already lost its other businesses.

Thus, if only to prevent a banking crisis with the fall of a major business like Meralco, the Lopez family surrendered to the dictatorial squeeze play.

That's all legal, huh? For the legal acquisition, the dictatorship paid the Lopezes an amazing $1,500—an amount so big, it was even payable in 10 years.

At such gorgeous terms, come to think of it, even my father, God bless his soul, could afford to buy the Lopezes out of Meralco, and I would then be known as Kokoy.

* * *

BUT the other beef of JPE against Meralco is, he claims it is behind the public outcry to shut down the coal power plants, five of which are operated by the government.

Those are all thanks to Napocor. Despite the health hazards from the coal plants, which are documented all over the world, Napocor insists on running them.

People already died of lung diseases in Calaca, Batangas, where two Napocor coal plants happened to be polluting the air with mercury and other poisons.

Based on a study by the University of Exeter in England, ash samples from coal plants in Zambales, Pangasinan and Quezon showed much worse pollution than Calaca.

Now Sen. John Osmeña once intimated to the public that Napocor would never close down the coal plants, for a simple reason called commission.

Napocor imports the coal. Every year it pays something like P8 billion to P10 billion for imported coal. Given the, ahh, "SOP" of at least 10 percent, that's a lot of money.

I'm sure JPE, who claims to have "reliable sources" in the power sector, has all the contacts to find out who are making money out of the coal importation. Let's see.

* * *

WE all know that the government and the automotive business are going into a new deal. The way it is going, it is getting to look more and more like a one-way street.

The automotive companies are working on a revised edition of the so-called motor vehicle program, or the MVDP.

That's a car-making program of the government which is now about 30 years old. Really, our car program is older than about 70 percent of all Filipinos.

And what have we to show for it? Today we still put together automotive parts, which are mostly imported, of course, and then we proudly call the result locally made.

I wonder what happened to that study in the automotive sector, done by the UP School of Economics, commissioned by the Department of Trade and Industry itself.

A few years ago, you see, the DTI could not believe that our automotive sector, if any, was still in the age of nuts and bolts, and we just screw things here together.

My info is, the study found out that the automotive companies did not develop a local auto parts making industry, because it was not good for them.

The study was never made public. We can only wonder why.

* * *

THUS today the automotive business can still make a lot of demands from the government, and not surprisingly, it gets everything.

The sector wanted the government to ban used cars and trucks, which came in through the Subic freeport. The government gave in, albeit silently, using the BIS.

That's the Bureau of Import Services, which happens to be under the DTI, and the BIS now refuses to give "import permits" on any shipment of used vehicles, period.

Anyway, the automotive assemblers and importers also asked the government for export incentives, under the revised MVDP, through tax credits.

If they export vehicles, for instance, they get "credits" which they can use to pay for import duties and taxes, which are also going to be much lower than ever before.

Now, if this is a romantic liaison, the automotive sector will be known, particularly in our barangay, as a "*bilmoko*" girl. And the government, as "*papa*."

* * *

IN return for all those favors, nevertheless, the Department of Finance wants a little change in the tax scheme for the automotive sector.

The present system has a big loophole. In tax lingo, "loophole" means it is easy for the car companies to cheat. The tax is based on seating capacity.

BREAKTIME/B5

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, September 23, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	19.5	19.75	19.25	19.75	222,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	47	47	46.5	46.5	617,000
China Banking Corp.	620	620	620	620	50
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	29.5	29.5	29	29	113,400
First E-Bank Corp.	1.16	1.32	1.16	1.28	311,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	34.5	34.5	33.5	34	154,400
Philippine National Bank	31	31	31	31	5,700
Security Bank Corp.	12	12	12	12	38,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	1,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.14	1.14	155,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1055	1055	1050	1055	1,950
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	90,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	865	865	860	860	1,830
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22.5	23	22.5	23	1,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	20,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	495	495	492.5	495	3,970
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.9	2.9	51,000
Piltel	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	500,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	292.5	295	290	290	9,030
Ivantage Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	14,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	18.75	19.25	18.5	18.75	134,400
Manila Electric Co. B	32	32	32	32	150,400
Petron Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.62	1,911,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	10,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	3.6	3.65	3.6	3.65	334,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	10,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	150,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.66	0.67	0.66	0.67	590,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	180,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	31	31	31	31	52,000
RFM Corp.	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	990,000
San Miguel Corp. A	53.5	54	53.5	54	107,200
San Miguel Corp. B	56	56	56	56	49,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.3	2,321,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.4	2.4	2.36	2.36	9,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	80,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.65	2.75	2.65	2.75	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	30,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	500,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	200,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	5,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	13	13.25	13	13.25	161,700
Ionics Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.2	4.2	19,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.34	1.36	1.34	1.36	175,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	110,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	280,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	200,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	40,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Cen Azucar de la Carlota	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	15,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	30,000
Interphil Labs Inc. B	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	40,000
Jardine Davies Inc.	25	25	20.25	20.25	3,000
Pryce Corp.	0.095	0.095	0.095	0.095	300,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.37	0.4	0.37	0.4	1,810,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	400,000
Bonds, Preferred & Warrants					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	700
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.6	3,192,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2	2	2	2	150,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	700,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	3,170,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.12	1.08	1.1	905,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	89,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	180,000
SM Development Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	70,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.7	10,718,000
MINING					
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	260,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	400,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	5,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	0.0026	20,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	700,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,713,630	46,604,520.00
Comm'l& Ind'l	1,096,837,030	3,886,090,416.87
PRO	19,174,000	81,180,720.00
Mining	660,000	202,000.00
OIL	35,700,000	115,000.00
GRAND TOTALS:	1,154,084,660	4,014,192,656.87
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	448 57	DOWN 5.21
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,565.21	DOWN 2.26
PRO	507.50	DOWN 0.91
Mining	1,096.25	UNCH 0.00
OIL	1.31	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	612.26	DOWN 10.21
Composite	1,138.63	DOWN 4.24

NO. OF ADVANCES: 9; NO. OF DECLINES: 27; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 40; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 76; NO. OF TRADES: 1,037

DISCLOSURES

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank clarified that although it had submitted to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas a proposal to assume the liabilities and buy some assets of **First e-Bank**, no notice of approval has been given by the Monetary Board.

* * *

APPOINTED compliance officer of **Pryce Corp.** was Geoffrey Cagakit.

* * *

SOUTH China Resources Inc. denied having any information that could explain the unusual price movement in the trading of its shares.

* * *

SOLID Group Inc. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from Sept. 24 to Oct. 24, 3 p.m., at the Fairways, Manila Golf and Country Club.

* * *

METROPOLITAN Bank & Trust Co. disclosed the resignation of Alfredo Javellana II as director of the bank.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Estates Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Oct. 23, 2:30 p.m, at the Clermont Function Room of Discovery Suites, Ortigas Center.

CURRENCIES

Sept. 23, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.018330	1.000000	52.4240
Japan	Yen	0.008248	0.008100	0.4246
United Kingdom	Pound	1.583401	1.554900	81.5141
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.130563	0.128213	6.7214
Switzerland	Franc	0.682435	0.670151	35.1320
Canada	Dollar	0.647381	0.635728	33.3274
Singapore	Dollar	0.572933	0.562620	29.4948
Australia	Dollar	0.556313	0.546299	28.6392
Bahrain	Dinar	2.701284	2.652661	139.0631
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.271540	0.266652	13.9790
Brunei	Dollar	0.574257	0.563920	29.5629
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000113	0.000111	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.023512	0.023089	1.2104
UAE	Dirham	0.277270	0.272279	14.2740
Korea	Won	0.000848	0.000833	0.0437
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.982000	51.4804
Argentina	Real	0.278995	0.273973	14.3628
Brazil	Real	0.295854	0.290529	15.2307
Denmark	Kroner	0.134545	0.132123	6.9264
India	Rupee	0.021057	0.020678	1.0840
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.268017	0.263193	13.7976
Mexico	New Peso	0.099020	0.099224	5.2017
New Zealand	Dollar	0.479236	0.470610	24.6713
Norway	Kroner	0.135615	0.133174	6.9815
Pakistan	Rupee	0.017260	0.016949	0.8885
South Africa	Rand	0.096319	0.094585	4.9585
Sweden	Kroner	0.110738	0.108745	5.7008
Syria	Pound	0.023039	0.022624	1.1860
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.029372	0.028843	1.5121
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000696	0.000683	0.0358

GOLFERS CLUB SHARES, INC.
SEC LICENSE # A 1998-2129
AS OF SEPT. 23, 2002

		SELLING	BUYING
1.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "A"	1,600,000	
2.	ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB "B"	1,700,000	
3.	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	720,000	680,000
4.	CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	80,000	
5.	CAMP JOHN HAY	280,000	250,000
6.	CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	550,000	
7.	CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	120,000	90,000
8.	CELEBRITY CLUB	180,000	170,000
9.	COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	400,000	380,000
10.	CLUB FILIPINO	100,000	
11.	EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	150,000	
12.	EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	330,000	300,000
13.	EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14.	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	200,000
15.	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	280,000	
16.	FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500,000	
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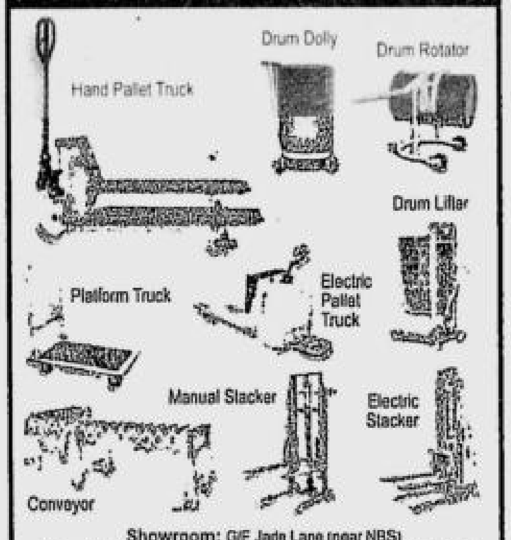

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SEPT 26 (THURSDAY)
1:00 - 3:00pm Manufacturing of Quality Electrodes by: Industrial Welding Corporation
3:00 - 4:00pm Various Products Demo/ Presentation by: Loctite/ Henkel Phils, Inc.
SEPT 27 (FRIDAY)
1:00 - 3:00pm Post-Weld Heat Treatment by: Voest Alpine
3:00 - 4:00pm OGP's 3D Non-Contact Measuring Machines by: Maedan Enterprises
4:00 - 5:00pm Welding Automation by: Toolec, Inc.
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1:30 - 2:00pm Elements of Lean Philosophy
2:00 - 2:30pm Waste Elimination
2:30 - 3:15pm Techniques of Lean Manufacturing
a) Value Stream Mapping
b) Measurable
3:15 - 3:30pm BREAK
3:30 - 6:00pm HHH Workshop
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Pru Life UK Launches Unit-Linked Life Product

Pru Life UK, the only British life insurer in the Philippines, will be launching its newest product, the Pru Link Investor Account, this September.

Unit-linked products originated in Europe, and became known as variable life insurance products in the U.S. Both refer to the same product template. A life insurance product becomes "variable" when the policy value at any time is linked to the investment funds, which are valued according to investment performance. Thus, the policy value directly reflects the fund value.

Another distinctive feature of unit-linked life insurance is the transparency of charges, where all investment elements including charges are made known to the policyholder at the outset. All deductions from the premium to cover various expenses by the company are clearly disclosed to the policyholder.

The premium is divided into insurance and investment portions, where the insurance coverage is usually a percentage of the total premium. The policyholder is given the freedom to "choose" the investment funds where his premiums will go. The fund is valued regularly and is divided into "units", which represent the policyholder's share in the fund. The value of the fund divided by the number of units is called its "unit price." An increase in the fund value increases the unit price, which likewise increases the policy's value.

Traditional life policies usually produce steady or fixed returns, while unit-linked products have a potential for higher returns, based on the market volatility. Unit-linked products are for those individuals who want control over the value, or growth, of their life policies. Additions or withdrawals can be made, and the policyholder also has the option of varying his protection – investment mix.

Pru Life UK, which is the local arm of the British insurance giant Prudential, is the first company to locally market this type of life product. Its counterparts in Singapore, Hongkong, Malaysia and Indonesia have experienced tremendous success in marketing unit-linked insurance since the product came out in the early 90's. Mr. Bobby Madrid, President and CEO of Pru Life believes the Philippine market is ready, especially during these times when there are very limited investment instruments for the public's financial needs. "We will let our consumers benefit from the financial expertise that Prudential is known for. Now, our policyholders will have direct control over their coverage, and their investments."

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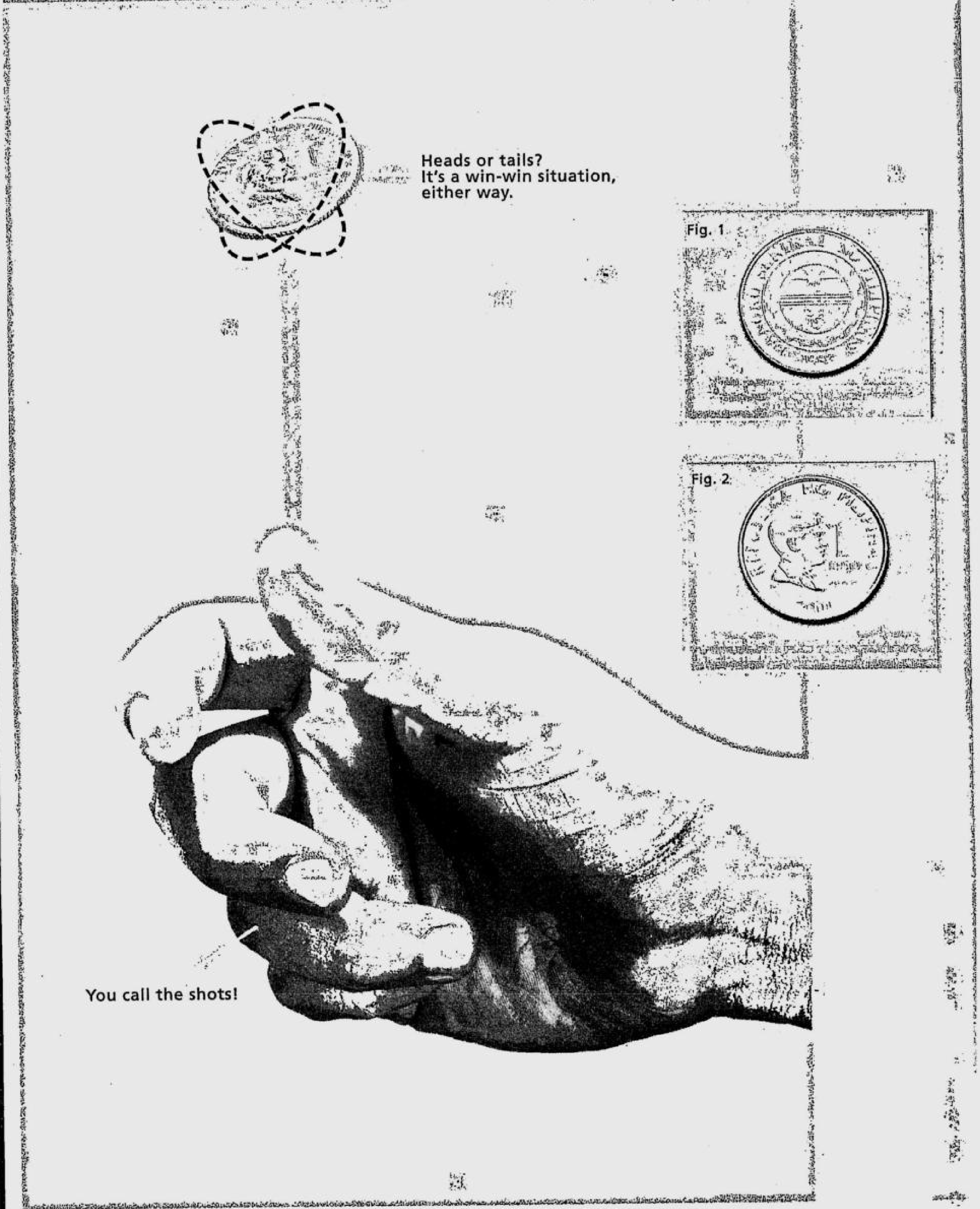
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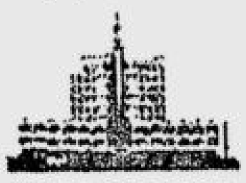

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LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of PEDRO TADIOS who has been missing since March 1994 was extrajudicially settled among his heirs per Doc# 482, Page# 96 Book# VIII series of 2002 of notary public LEOPOLDO ULANDAY of Quezon City.
(PDI-Sept. 10, 17 & 24, 2002)

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Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen

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INSURANCE FOR COCO FARMERS
A memorandum of agreement doubling the insurance coverage of over 1 million coconut farmers from P5,000 to P10,000 was signed recently by the Philippine Coconut Authority, Cocolife, United Coconut Planters Bank and the Coconut Industry Investment Fund Oil Mills. Signatories to the agreement are (seated from left) Cocolife president Alfredo C. Tumacder Jr., Cocolife chair Noel Cabrera, PCA Administrator Danny Coronacion and UCPB chair Edward Go. Witnessing the signing (from left) are corporate secretary Jose Barcelon, PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza, Cocolife SVP for operations Carina Corona and Cocolife farmer-directors Alberto Ada, Datu Mao Andong Jr. and Oscar Pialago.

RP rice imports hit 1.14M tons this year

THE COUNTRY bought a total of 150,000 tons of rice from Vietnam, Thailand and China for buffer stocks, bringing the country's total imports to 1.14 million tons this year, officials said yesterday.

The new orders by the Philippines, one of Asia's largest importers of rice, are expected to be the last for the year.

The country bought about 780,000 tons of rice in 2001.

In its latest transaction, the Philippines bought 100,000 tons of 25-percent broken rice from Vietnam at $205.80 per ton, including cost and freight (C&F), officials privy to the deal.

The Philippines also bought 25,000 tons of the same grade of rice from Thailand at $207 per ton C&F and another 25,000 tons from China at $208.70 per ton C&F.

The rice that will be supplied by Vietnam and Thailand should arrive in the country no later than Oct. 15 while the rice coming from China should arrive no later than Oct. 31.

Officials of state trading firm National Food Authority (NFA) said earlier this month they did not expect rice imports this year to exceed 1.14 million tons.

But they said the Philippines planned to return to the rice import market as early as the first quarter next year because of worries over the El Niño weather pattern.

The Philippines usually buys rice in the second quarter of each year to build buffer stocks in the third quarter, the lean season in local rice output.

Meteorologists have said they expected El Niño, which is associated with drought in Southeast Asia, to recur in October and last until the first half of 2003.

The fourth-quarter rice harvest produces 40 to 45 percent of the annual output.

The Philippine government said last week it would allow the private sector to import the grain next year, lifting the monopoly of NFA.

For next year, a senior official said the country might import another 800,000 tons of rice to fill the shortfall in domestic output. The country, one of Asia's largest rice buyers, imported 1.14 million tons of the staple grain so far this year. *Reuters*

Public debt up 16% in July

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S public debt rose by 16 percent in July to P2.658 trillion, from P2.296 trillion a year ago, as the government actively borrowed funds from the foreign and local markets to finance its widening budget deficit.

Data from the Bureau of Treasury showed that the nation's debt grew by 0.3 percent or P7.67 billion or from the previous month's level of P2.650 trillion in June.

Local debts rose 21 percent from P1.15 trillion in July 2001 while offshore borrowings also grew by 10.48 percent to P1.265 trillion from P1.145 trillion a year ago.

Compared with the previous month when public debt rose significantly due to fresh bonds issued in June, government debts hardly moved in July.

Borrowings from the local market slid by 0.43 percent in July to P1.392 trillion from P1.398 trillion in June. The decline reflected the continued rejection by the Treasury of the higher offers of banks for government securities.

Foreign borrowings inched up by 1.09 percent on a month-on-month basis and largely on account of a weaker peso.

The government used a foreign exchange average of P51.15 to $1 in computing its obligations in July compared to an average of P50.5 to $1 in the previous month.

The government had thwarted the local market's efforts to bring domestic interest rates up in reaction to an increasing fiscal gap that stood at P133 billion as of July.

National Treasurer Sergio Edeza pointed out that a big chunk of the government's requirement for the financing of the deficit this year had already been raised.

He said the P63-billion proceeds from the sale of three-and-five-year retail bonds in June gave the government enough room to keep on rejecting unreasonable bids for treasury bills and bonds. This helped monetary authorities in keeping interest rates stable this year.

In September, however, the government went back to the foreign bond market to raise $300 million worth of funds maturing in five years. Edeza said the money would be used in bridging the budget gap for next year which was projected to hit P142 billion.

Much-criticized for the increasing public debt, government officials stressed that 90 percent of the country's debts were to mature in more than five years and only 10 percent would fall due in a year.

The debt stock released by the Treasury covered only the state's local and foreign borrowings. The external borrowings of the private sector are reflected in the debt stock statistics released periodically by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

RP-UAE air talks shelved

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs has again suspended negotiations with the United Arab Emirates for an air service agreement even after the Philippine government had signified interest in pushing through with the scheduled negotiations on Wednesday and Thursday.

Officials of the UAE Air Panel accepted last Thursday the invitation sent by its Philippine counterpart for an air service agreement negotiations on Wednesday and Thursday this week. But the DFA on Friday sent another letter to the UAE saying the air talks would no longer push through as scheduled.

An industry source revealed that the UAE government was still considering its options, including exerting more effort to convince the Philippines to push through with the discussions.

In line with this, civil aviation advocacy group Freedom to Fly Coalition is now seeking the Senate's help to ensure that the RP-UAE air talks will push through as soon as possible.

In a letter to Sen. Francis Pangilinan, FFC president Mila Abad urged the Senate's assistance in convincing the Civil Aeronautics Board and the Department of Transportation and Communications—the lead agencies in the Philippine Air Panel—to reconsider the postponement of the air talks.

She also pointed out that the country's reluctance to increase frequency entitlements for flights to and from Dubai was merely an attempt to prevent pioneer flag carrier Philippine Airlines Inc. from losing a high-yield code-sharing agreement with its UAE counterpart, the Emirates.

"It is not right to restrict air seat capacity between the Philippines and Dubai in order to protect the agreement between the Emirates and PAL, where the Emirates pays PAL about $1 million a year to use the entitlement which PAL is not using. (Executive Order) 219 clearly seeks to establish the primary beneficiaries of civil aviation: the users of air services, primarily the many Filipinos here and abroad," she said. EO 219 contains the country's aviation liberalization policy.'

Breaktime

From page B2

For a 10-seater, you don't pay excise tax. That's why, today, we can find all those weird looking SUV and AUV that have jump seats, which are big enough for dwarfs.

The DOF wants to plug the loophole, by basing the tax on the value of the vehicle, instead of the seating capacity.

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Per DTI NCR Permit No. 3316 Series of 2002

Industrial nations press Opec to trim oil prices

A WOMAN displays the first Malaysian-made wireless personal digital assistant in Kuala Lumpur. Apart from the typical PDA functions, the "SkyPDA" also acts as a pager and offers up-to-date information, such as quotes from the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, foreign exchange rates, current local and international news, and local restaurant, cinema or hotel information. AP

OSAKA, Japan—The world's industrialized nations launched on Sunday a concerted campaign to pressure Opec countries into sharply cutting oil prices.

The move, backed by Asian countries at the International Energy Forum, came amid fears of further oil price hikes if the United States led an offensive into Iraq, and if Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein retaliated by launching an attack on other Arab countries.

"They're looking for $21 a barrel. It costs $12 a barrel to get it out of the ground so a $10 premium is considered reasonable," one source close to the delegates told AFP.

Oil is currently trading at the high end of the $22 to $28 a barrel price band targeted by the 11-member Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries after it opted last week to leave quotas unchanged with total production at 21.7 million barrels a day.

Opec dominates global oil production and dictates the world's oil prices.

The forum was supposed to cover all aspects of global energy demand but the emphasis here has remained on a sharply lower oil price amid euphemisms of "harmonizing relations between consumers and exporters."

Cheaper oil would provide a fillip to flagging Western economies, particularly Europe, the United States and Canada ahead of the approaching northern hemisphere winter.

Another source said delegates were also mindful of the 1991 Gulf War, when the price of crude shot through the $40 mark and caused a recession in the United States, resulting in then US President George Bush being voted out of office.

However, the war premium was not seen as solely responsible for high prices and raising production was not seen as a viable option.

"Increasing production at the present time is not going to address that factor," Britain's energy minister, Brian Wilson, said.

Instead, industrialized countries want illegal excess capacity, which is widely seen as skewing oil prices, taken out of the market.

More than 1.5 million barrels of oil a day in production cheating by Opec members, and more in illegal sales from Iraq, is believed to be in the international market.

Analysts said if this were removed, then true supply and demand could be determined, which would lead to a more realistic price.

Wilson said a consensus had been reached to provide a safeguard against sharp fluctuation of oil prices "at a time of international uncertainty."

"Historically, such conditions have given rise to large increases in the price of oil," he said. "There is a clear consensus to act in order to avoid a sustained period of damaging high prices." Indian petroleum minister Ram Naik backed the call for lower oil prices and against a separate premium paid by Asia.

Asian countries pay $1.5 to $2 above the European and US prices because Asian countries purchase oil in lower quantities.

"It is imperative that for economic development, the cost of the country's major primary energy source . . . remains at stable levels·which a common man in a developing country can afford," Naik said. *AFP*

US phone firm to correct capacity sales

DENVER—Qwest Communications International Inc., a local US telephone company facing federal probes of its accounting practices, said on Sunday that it expected to restate $950 million in revenues and costs for swaps of optical-network capacity.

The transactions in question included the exchange of optical capacity with other carriers, it said.

The Denver-based company said it might also restate up to $531 million in sales of optical capacity for cash. The magnitude of the adjustments and the periods affected have not yet been determined.

The US House energy and commerce committee will hold a series of hearings starting on Tuesday to examine deals among Qwest, Global Crossing Ltd., FLAG Telecom and Cable & Wireless.

In July, Qwest, the dominant local telephone company in 14 states from Minnesota to Washington, said it would restate its results because it improperly booked $1.16 billion in sales and other items in 1999 to 2001.

Some of the problems disclosed on Sunday were included in that original announcement.

Qwest said its total potential restatement now stood at about $1.48 billion since it planned to restate only the results since its June 2000 acquisition of local telephone company US West.

In the year-and-a-half before the merger, Qwest said it recognized $1.32 billion in sales from capacity swaps.

The company said it continued to cooperate with an investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission and Department of Justice.

Qwest said it was "optimistic" that Sunday's disclosure of additional restatements offers a "first step toward a possible resolution" of its discussions with the SEC. *Reuters*

Dole chief offers to buy rest of company

LOS ANGELES—Dole Food Co. Inc.'s top executive has offered to buy the remaining shares in the world's largest producer of fresh fruits he does not already own for about $1.26 billion in cash.

David Murdock, Dole's billionaire chair and chief executive, presented a proposal to the company's board on Sunday to purchase the 76-percent stake he and his family did not already own for $29.50 a share.

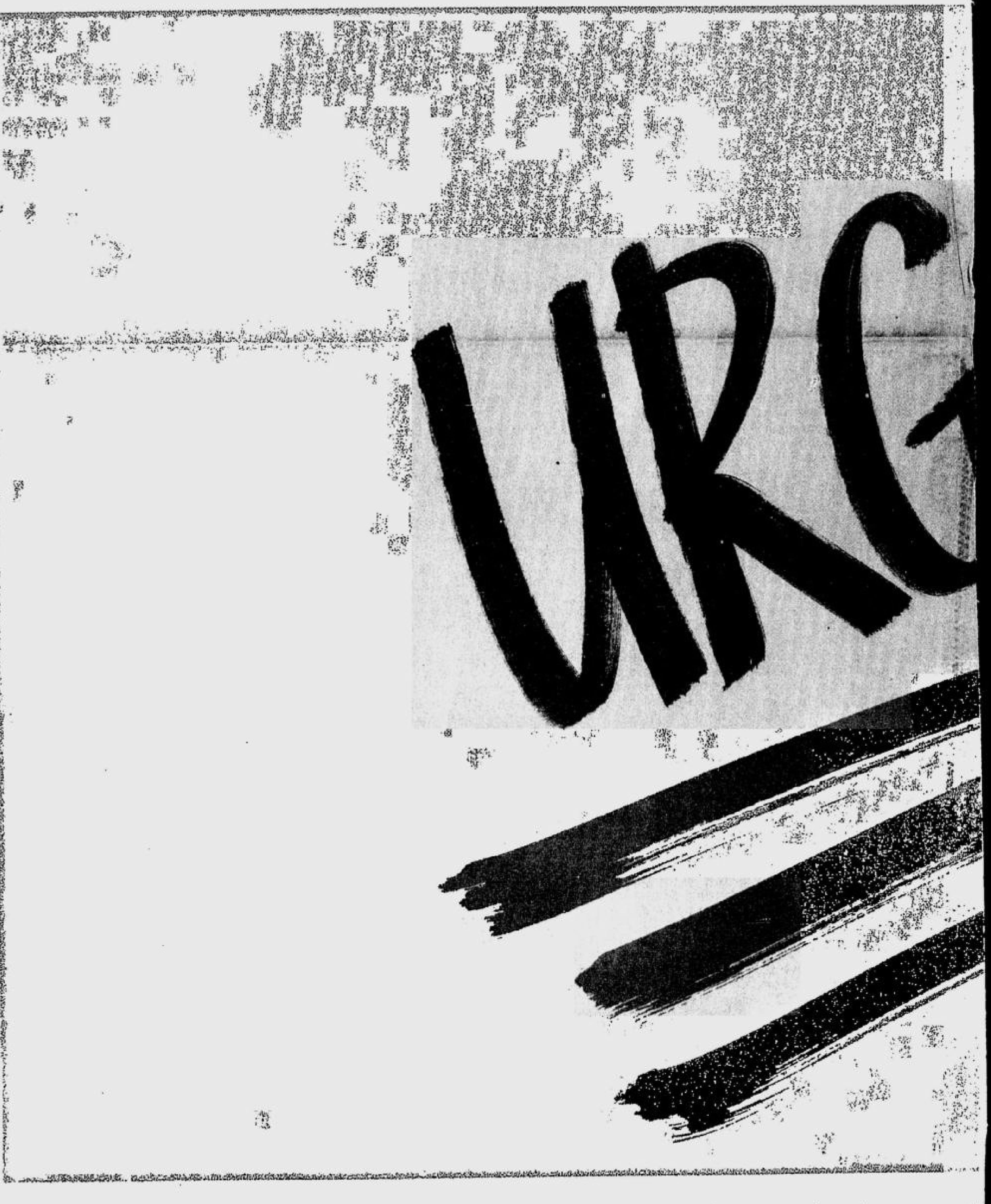
That represents a 20.5-percent premium over the company's closing price of $24.49 Friday on the New York Stock Exchange.

Murdock said he received a "highly confident" letter from Deutsche Bank AG indicating it would help fund the bid.

He added that he also would assume any outstanding company debt, bringing the enterprise value of his offer to $2.5 billion.

Dole issued its own statement confirming it had received the offer and said it would immediately ask a committee of independent board members to review the bid. The company offered no timeframe.

Dole, a company whose roots stretch back more than 150 years, has grown from a small, family-owned pineapple business to the world's largest producer of fresh fruits and vegetables. *Reuters*



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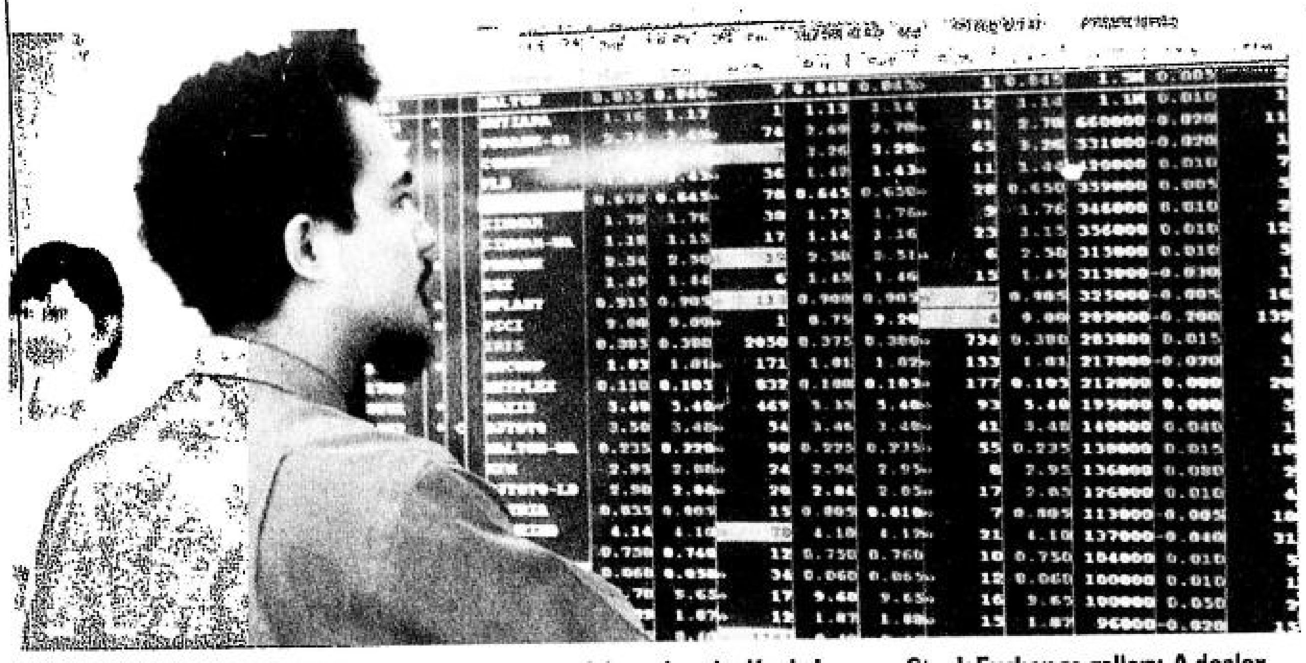


A VISITOR studies share prices on an electronic stock board at the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange gallery. A dealer said banking stocks fell as investors reacted unfavorably to the 2003 budget. AP

WASHINGTON—The slumping stock market, lackluster job growth and increasing worries about possible war with Iraq are battering the economy. Yet Federal Reserve policymakers are not expected to come through with further interest rate cuts when they meet Tuesday.

Private economists believe Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan and his colleagues will decide that by leaving rates at a 40-year low, they are doing enough to prod a sustainable economic recovery.

That outcome would disappoint Wall Street. Many investors believe the Fed needs to make additional cuts to bolster consumer and business confidence, which has been shaken by the recession, terror and corporate scandals.

"The Federal Reserve is not going to cut rates simply to boost the stock market," said Sung Won Sohn, chief economist at Wells Fargo in Minneapolis. "The economic numbers are not as robust as the Fed would like to see, but Fed officials believe moderate economic growth is occurring."

The Fed, at its last meeting on Aug. 13, decided to leave its target for overnight bank borrowing at 1.75 percent, where it had been since December. The Fed held out the possibility of further rate cuts by indicating it viewed economic weakness rather than inflation as the bigger threat in the months ahead.

Even though many analysts said they expected rates to remain steady on Tuesday, there remained a chance of a rate cut at one of the bank's final two meetings, in November or December. That could become more possible if there are more economic shocks—for example, a big drop in consumer confidence from a US invasion of Iraq, or new terrorism attacks or a potential disruption in oil supplies because of Middle East tensions.

"The Fed is preserving some ammunition in case they need it," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's in New York. "There are a lot of things that could go wrong out there." *AP*

Software maker Peregrine Systems files Chapter 11 bankruptcy

SAN DIEGO—Software maker Peregrine Systems Inc. filed for bankruptcy protection on Sunday and said it planned to bring a $250-million lawsuit against its former auditor, Arthur Andersen LLP, blaming it for Peregrine's dire financial condition.

San Diego-based Peregrine listed assets of $1.7 billion and more than $607 million in liabilities in its filing before a US bankruptcy court in Delaware. The bankruptcy protection petition is the latest move in a downward spiral that began in May with the disclosure of irregularities in financial statements audited by Andersen.

An internal investigation found the company inflated its revenue by as much as $250 million from April 1999 to the end of 2001. The company said it improperly booked the sale of accounts receivables as revenue.

A cash and credit crunch, an investigation by the Securities and Exchange Commission and a host of shareholder lawsuits followed the disclosures. Peregrine's stock, which traded for pennies, was removed last month from the Nasdaq Stock Exchange.

Peregrine said it planned to file suit Monday against Andersen and audit partner Daniel Strulac in San Diego Superior Court for "negligence, fraud, and breach of audit and accounting duties," according to a company news release.

"Had they acted in a prompt manner, we would not be in the dire financial straits we find ourselves in now," said Peregrine chief executive Gary Greenfield. *AP*

Bayer set to sell Viagra competitor

NEW YORK—When a drug's name is designed to conjure up thoughts of men and life and its logo is a symbol of passion, it can only mean one thing: the latest would-be Viagra competitor has been christened.

It's called Levitra, the entry from Bayer AG and GlaxoSmithKline PLC into the erectile dysfunction market, which was virtually owned by Viagra. The Pfizer Inc. drug sales totaled $1.5 billion last year.

Levitra's name was to be released on Monday at a medical meeting in Montreal along with data that might find its way into what is expected to be a very expensive marketing campaign set to begin next year, when the drug is introduced.

The companies declined to say how much they would spend to promote Levitra, but the drug would get "whatever it takes" to resonate with consumers and doctors, said Glaxo senior vice president David Pernock.

Last year, Pfizer spent $101 million marketing Viagra to consumers, making it the fourth most heavily promoted drug in the United States.

The battle for dominance in a condition that affects about 30 million American men—about half of them over 40—is expected to be fierce.

The new entrants will probably persuade more men to see a doctor about their problem, broadening the market, experts said. *AP*

Microsoft's Xbox faces key Christmas test

LONDON—It's been just six months since Microsoft Corp. launched its video game console Xbox in Europe and there is already mounting pressure on the US software giant to score a big Christmas.

The Xbox needs to end its first year with a flourish. If it doesn't, industry observers say, its prospects for turning a profit will be pushed back a few years, triggering some deep soul-searching at Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Wash.

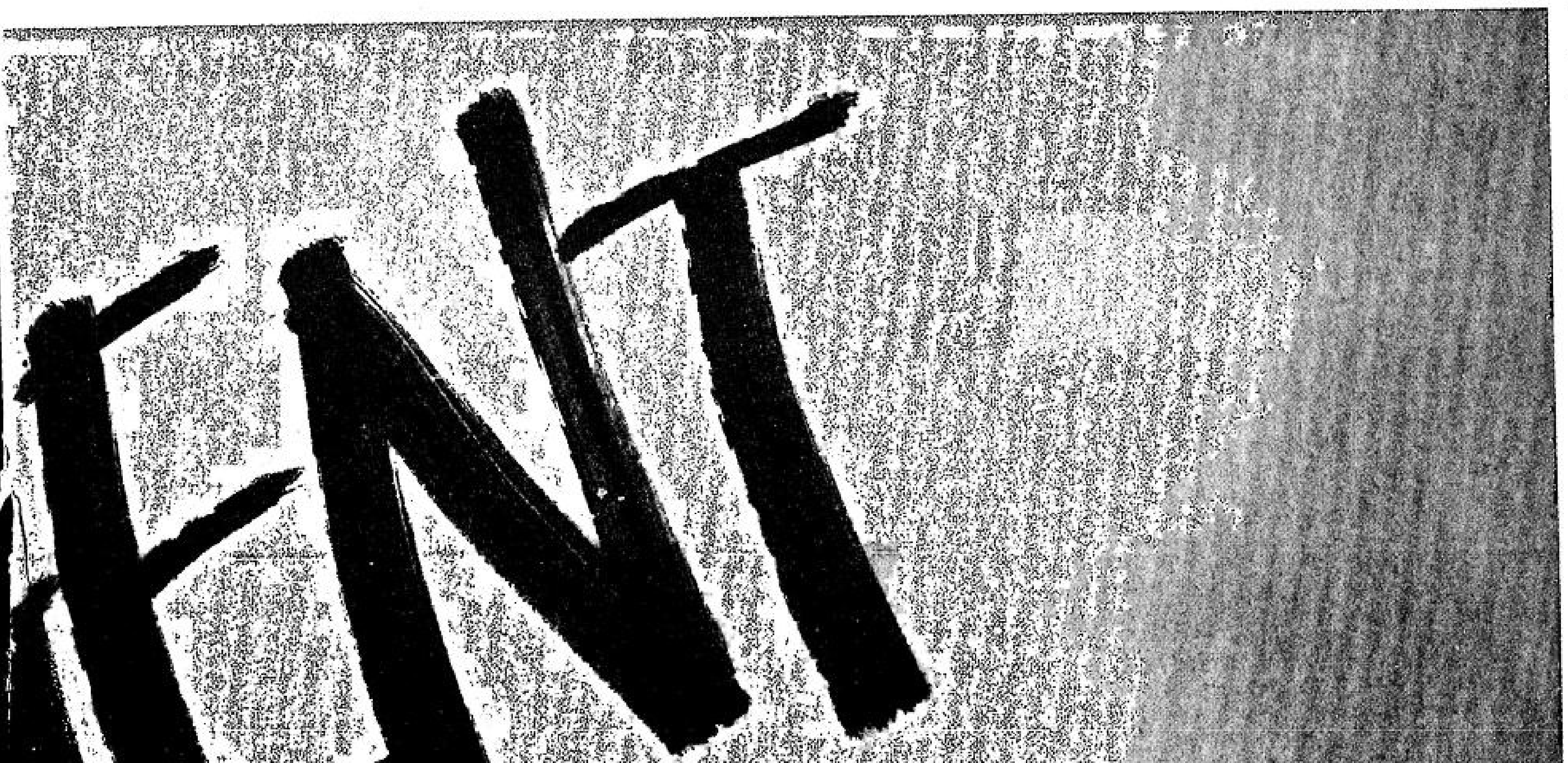
"If Microsoft has a disastrous Christmas, particularly in important markets like the United Kingdom and the United States, then somebody in Redmond is bound to say, 'Wait a minute guys. This doesn't look good'," said Toby Scott, editor of video game trade publication "Games Analyst."

Industry experts are quick to point out the $30-billion video game market has never supported three consoles.

While the market is now bigger than ever, rivaling music and film box office sales, one elemental truth remains. Without a large installed base, developers are less inclined to create exclusive games for a machine, making profits elusive.

A poor Christmas won't sway Microsoft's commitment immediately, but with estimated losses of anywhere from $76 to $150 on each Xbox, its prospects for being able to stay in the market long-term will look a lot murkier if it fails to capitalize on what could be the industry's biggest sales periods ever.

Early Xbox sales sagged below expectations, forcing Microsoft into embarrassing back-to-back price cuts within a four month span. *Reuters*



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REALESTATE

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Gov't, private sector pledge 100,000 houses

By Charles E. Buban

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ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

IN AN unprecedented show of unity, private and government housing sectors will gather in Baguio City in October, declared as Housing Month, to commit before President Macapagal-Arroyo the construction of at least 100,000 new housing units starting this year up to 2004.

President Macapagal will be formally presented with a resolution from the Chamber of Real Estate and Builder's Associations (Creba) on behalf of the housing developers to take aggressive efforts to deliver the target number of housing units with the assistance and facilities of government housing agencies under the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council.

The pledging session is expected to strengthen President Macapagal's promise of delivering socialized and economic housing units for the homeless underprivileged and middle-income families before her term ends in 2004. In her recent State of the Nation Address, President Macapagal had identified housing as one of her administration's priority programs.

Biggest gathering

The event to be held at the Baguio Country Club is expected to be the biggest gathering of private sectors as Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, who also sits as HUDCC chair, and Creba national president Florentino Dulalia Jr. announced the participation of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, which represents real estate developers nationwide, and several members of the Private Sector Consultative Council for Shelter.

Also included under the PCCS umbrella are the Organization of Socialized Housing Developers of the Philippines, Women in Shelter and Its Environment, and Builders Alliance Toward Action.

"I consider this joint undertaking as one of the major government-private sector cooperative efforts to revitalize the real estate industry and spur economic growth. It is a realization that housing contributes positively not only to the economy, but also to social stability, job generation, even peace and order," said SHDA chair Teofisto Guingona III. "We are confident that, with the help of PCCS-member organizations, the target 100,000 units can be reached."

SHDA national president Jesus Atencio said he believes that the event is a chance for them to relay to President Macapagal, the need to reform several housing policies that developers need to enable to achieve their pledged commitment. The issues to be raised include relaxing the lending policies of Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-Ibig Fund), faster facilitation of land conversion by the Department of Agrarian Reform and cutting the red tape in processing development permits in the local government units.

Said Atencio: "At present, SHDA developers have at least 54 applications for conversion and exemption with the Department of Agrarian Reform, which roughly translates to some 850 hectares capable of producing 55,000 new housing units. It would be perfect if the DAR will be able to release all these pending applications as soon as possible, so we can contribute to the 100,000 housing unit commitment."

Addressing the issue

In this regard, the SHDA met recently with Agrarian Reform Secretary Hernani Braganza and other department officials to address the issue of processing. Braganza revealed that a new set of Agrarian Law implementing rules is due for release within the month, which would effectively resolve the policy and procedural gaps in the administrative order for conversion, thus paving the way for the expeditious processing and approval of developer's conversion and exemption applications.

"We just hope these new rules would give us no more additional requirements since we already have plenty of them at present. For the time being, we'll just wait and see if indeed these new policies are beneficial to us developers," Atencio added.

Also during their meeting, the DAR secretary asked the SHDA to include in its members' application a project information sheet specifying, among others, that the conversion application is actually for mass housing project. "To make the processing much easier and faster," according to Atençio.

Small percentage

Until now a very small percentage of the country's total land area has been converted for residential purposes. According to the SHDA, of the country's total land area of 30 million hectares, only 35,314 hectares or 0.11 percent of land has been converted to residential purposes from 1979 to 2001. When compared to the country's total agricultural area of 10 million hectares, the converted area only accounts to 0.35 percent.

"The DAR and farmers group should not be afraid about land conversion for residential use since this findings reveal a very minimal percentage of the country's land being converted for mass housing development," said Atencio.

In its commitment to follow DAR rules and regulation, SHDA developers nationwide have committed to the formulation of an overall land use plan that could guide developers and planners where to locate their specific development projects and at the same time leave agricultural lands free for agrarian reform and food production.

"Other sectors should also realize that while we are pushing for our objectives, we are also in support of the administration's objectives of providing farmers land tenure and food sufficiency," said Atencio. "We need to balance out certain issues—DAR's versus housing sector's objectives—and through our combined effort we can achieve our own respective goals."

Defensor reveals housing backlog now at 500,000

By Ronnie Lorejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

DEFENSOR

LEGAZPI CITY—The country is suffering from a housing backlog of at least 500,000 as shown by the number of homeless Filipinos, Secretary Michael Defensor, presidential adviser on housing, disclosed in a press conference held Thursday evening at the Albay Hotel here.

Defensor attributed some reasons for the backlog to the problems with the Department of Agriculture wherein the inherent concerns are the pending land cases. As of now, he said, there are 16,000 pipeline cases and 14,000 litigation cases.

Informal migration

The housing czar also cited the increasing number of population, especially in the urban centers, caused by informal migration of people from the rural areas.

"Population is really a big factor and its density in the urban areas is the one that concerns us," Defensor said.

He visited Legazpi City to look into different local housing concerns as part of his campaign to promote different programs on housing.

Homeless people

In a multisectoral consultation held on the same day, he found out that in Legazpi City alone, there are about 16,000 homeless people in the urban center.

Defensor said that much as the government wants to stop migration in the urban centers, the situation is uncontrollable. Thus, he urged the cooperation of the local government units to address the problem.

He also blamed the previous administration in its inconsistency in responding to the needs for housing as a reason for the big number of backlog.

"It's because the government does not have consistent response in terms of housing. In the previous administrations, there were efforts but not really enough," he asserted. "This time, we need to come up with a more concrete program."

Defensor noted that at present there is already Administrative Order 45, which fast tracks the applications for permits and licenses for housing.

He explained that in this particular order, local and even national officials would be penalized if they do not act on the applications.

Apprehension

The young politician also cleared the issue on the apprehension of Pag-Ibig employees about their inclusion in the proposed Department of Housing.

He pointed out that the Pag-Ibig people have nothing to worry about since the Pag-Ibig Fund cannot just be moved by anyone, and that doing so is tantamount to graft and corruption.

Defensor further explained that the fund is secured and controlled by its board of trustees.

"If SSS and GSIS will be the basis, there were even more anomalies in the past. Hopefully, after this, people will see that it's nothing but an expansion of the program," he said.

The Pag-Ibig Fund regional office here in Legazpi City has been one of those that have actively participated in the rallies and protest actions against the issue on Pag-Ibig's inclusion in the proposed Department of Housing with the suspicion that the money would just be utilized for Defensor's political future.

At present there are about 116,000 regular Bicolano Pag-Ibig members, which is 2.4 percent of the entire membership nationwide.

One Asia offers condos with sports amenities

BUOYED by a strong demand from health-conscious buyers, property developer One Asia Development Corp. announces its condominium project with sports club amenities in Diliman, Quezon City.

Vic Manarang, One Asia president and chief executive officer, said The Celebrity Place condominium villa will offer some 140 units to be built and integrated within the P1.2-billion townhouse project.

Target markets

The condo project's target markets are the young urban professionals and start-up families who are sporty and health-conscious.

"These are the emerging markets for value-for-money condos. And we thought of this concept to address this segment," said Manarang.

Manarang pointed out that ownership of a condo unit within the Celebrity Place automatically gives the unit owner an instant membership privilege of Celebrity Sports Club, one of the country's leading leisure and recreation center located adjacent to the project.

The Celebrity Place condominium offers studio-type, single, double or triple bedroom units with gross floor areas ranging from 31 to 104 square meters. All units come with individual parking slot. Garden areas of 35 to 40 sq. m are also allotted for the one-, two- and three-bedroom units. Smallest studio units are priced below P2 million.

Condo offerings

Unit owners will have access to all the club's facilities including an Olympic-size swimming pool, bowling lanes, tennis and badminton courts as well as spa and jacuzzi. The condo project offers buyers an attractive payment scheme for as low as P10,000 monthly amortization.

Perched within a two-hectare property owned by Riviera Land Corp. The Celebrity Place is the maiden project of One Asia. It boasts of 204 units to be completed in five phases. The initial phase, which will be available for occupancy by year-end, will consist of 21 townhouses in four clusters. Each unit, which sells at P6 to P10 million, targets the upscale residential buyers.

The project's California-Mission design conceived by architect Rolando Mercado provides the in-city community a high level of sophistication. Each unit will have three floors, high cathedral ceiling for the living and dining areas, a two-car garage and a refreshing garden.

ISO CERTIFIED Metaphil, a division of the Aboitiz Construction Group, has been awarded an ISO 9001 certification by the TUV Product and Management Services. Receiving the award from TUV's Lui Restauro are Metaphil chair and CEO Roberto Aboitiz and vice chair Charlie Ng.

SIGNING the GSIS-Creba agreement are GSIS senior VP Arnaldo C. Cuasay, EVP Reynaldo P. Palmeri and president-general manager Winston F. Garcia; Creba national president Florentino S. Dulalaia Jr. and corporate secretary Luis B. Pangilinan Jr. Standing from left are Creba stalwarts Rafael Pula, Efren "Choy" Alas and Editha L. Manansala, president, Moldex Marketing Corp. and Creba VP-internal affairs; Demetrio L. Posadas, president, Creba Social Housing Foundation, Creba director and former national president Pete C. Tario, and Thaddeus R. Liamson, immediate past president and chair, private Sector Consultative Council for Shelter. Present but not shown is Amado S. Bagatsing, Creba VP-external affairs.

Creba supports P24-B GSIS project

THE CHAMBER of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) yesterday urged the housing and realty industry to support the "Bahay Ko" program of the Government Service Insurance System as part of the measures to boost the housing program for the low- and middle-income families and thus help pump-prime the national economy.

Creba national president Florentino S. Dulalia Jr. issued the call following the signing of a Creba-GSIS memorandum of agreement last Friday making available to Creba members-developers a P24-billion home-buyers' take-out facility in the next four years through the "Bahay Ko" program. It is a long-term, low, fixed interest rate and multi-purpose housing loan scheme.

Dulalia and GSIS president and general manager Winston F. Garcia signed the agreement at the GSIS board room.

Work together

Creba and the GSIS also agreed to work together on the development, repackaging and disposition of GSIS inventory of unawarded and unoccupied residential and commercial acquired assets in several sites in the country. These multimillion-peso idle assets may be disposed off to non-GSIS members.

Under the GSIS housing program for its still 600,000 homeless members, the loans will be released within five working days from submission of complete loan requirements for the mutual benefit of homebuyers and developers. The developers, who are acting as loan contract originators, will not be subject to a buy-back provision for defaulting buyers. This provision is considered an onerous imposition on the developers.

The interest rates, the lowest in the housing market, are 8 percent for a loan of P180,000 and less, 10 percent for P181,000 to P300,000 and 12 percent for more than P300,000. The loan is payable for 25 years for packages of P181,000 to P500,000, and for 30 years for P180,000 or less. The fixed rate is good for the whole term of the loan. The monthly amortization is deductible from the borrower's pay.

To be tapped for the GSIS project of repackaging and disposal of idle acquired assets, Dulalia said, are the licensed appraisers, brokers and consultants who are Creba individual members, belonging to the 10 other member-organizations under the Realty Service Council of the Philippines (Rescop).

Vital role

At the signing of the MOA, Dulalia stressed the vital role of the housing and building industry as "the engine of economic growth" in the country in view of its multiplier impact on scores of related industries and job generation for thousands of workers. Garcia went further by saying that, in a sense, the housing industry members are "the heroes of this country."

A technical working group composed of the GSIS and Creba executives will be formed to formulate the details of the MOA and serve as the secretariat for all cooperative efforts and projects arising from the agreement.

Under the MOA, the GSIS recognized Creba as a nongovernment organization with the capability of effectively supporting the government program of providing decent housing and basic services to government workers and other sectors, reinvigorate the housing industry and create jobs for Filipino workers.

Developers eye 'weekend homes'

By Tessa R. Salazar

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

DEVELOPERS are exploring new niches such as "weekend" or vacation homes because there seems to be saturation in affordable high-rise residentials.

This was the trend revealed by Colliers International's quarterly research report on the Philippine market overview released in July. The research report said the take-up of newly launched affordable high-rise residential developments has not been as quick as earlier projects. Affordable high-rise residential projects such as Megaworld's Paseo Parkview, which was completed in 1998, brought about the saturation.

"From a peak of 60 units per month when the concept was considered new, recently launched projects have achieved sales of 5 to 34 units per month," said the report.

Farm lots

The "new niches" being packaged are mostly themed as farm lots. The INQUIRER featured these farm lots last week, indicating that the developers were singing the same tune—wooing city-dwellers, executives and retirees to "get their hands dirty" and become weekend farmers or *hacienderos*.

Topping the list is the Ayala Land Inc. subsidiary Laguna Properties Holdings Inc. that recently launched its master-planned community called Hacienda Sta. Monica and Villa Sta Monica in Lipa City. It is a combination of farming and residential use.

Hacienda Sta. Monica, a 64-hectare farm development, offers cuts of 750 to 1,500-sq.-m farm lots and hacienda lots ranging from 4,000 to 5,000 sq. m. The 30-hectare residential village known as Villa Sta. Monica will have lot sizes from 200 to 300 square meters.

Filinvest Land Inc.'s 200-hectare Nusa Dua estate is located at Barangay Paradahan, Tanza, Cavite. Vegetable growing, horticulture, aquaculture and other farming activities are being offered in this side of town. Lot cuts range from 750 to 2,000 sq. m.

> The 'new niches' being packaged are mostly themed as farm lots

Landco Pacific's residential farm estate launched in October 2001 is now on its way to its second phase with nearly 200 reservations for the estate development. Lot cuts range from 1,000 sq. m to over a hectare.

Ayala Land Inc., meanwhile, is set to reconfigure the Capitol Hills Golf course into a 57-par course with the holes pushed to the perimeter to give way to 241 single detached residential lots. Colliers International research report cited that the first 100 of the 241 lots are set to be sold starting October this year with lot cuts ranging from 355 to 1,260 sq. m.

High-rise residentials

Colliers also said that even with the saturation, the high-rise residential segment continues to outperform the three-bedroom luxury segment. Cited as developments in the high-rise segment are residential establishments at the fourth level of Greenbelt 2 car park, a community of 28 private townhomes available on an annual lease basis starting 2003; the twin tower project Oriental Gardens Makati located at the corner of Chino Roces and Urban Avenue.

Also cited was the resumption of One McKinley Place, which had been shelved for almost two years. Urbancorp Realty Developers Inc., Philtown and Export and Import Bank signed an agreement to start the delivery of the completed units in the first quarter of 2003.

Also set to be revived is the P2.2-billion Shang Tower dela Rosa in the Makati CBD. This Kuok Philippine Properties project is set to be built on a 2,800-sq.-m lot owned by SGV&Co. and the Centrum Group. This project was launched in early 1997 but was shelved due to the Asian financial crisis.

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Traffic congestion caused by outdated zoning laws

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

AN AVERAGE worker spends close to one and a half months or 1,000 hours of their lives stuck in traffic, which can be attributed to the outdated zoning laws, deed restrictions and local government ordinances.

Architect and urban planner Felino Palafox Jr. said in an interview that these outdated restrictions and zoning laws have caused residential areas to be farther away from places of work, thus, causing traffic congestion.

"The daytime population in the Makati central district, for instance, is about 11 times more than the night time population. This translates to inefficiencies and a strain on utilities," Palafox said.

Quezon City, on the other hand, can be likened to a dormitory because there are hardly any people and commerce during the day. Commercial centers are not comparative with Makati or Ortigas because it was built over the past 50 years into a government and residential center.

One of the solutions to the multifaceted problem, he explained, is to create a so-called City of the 21st century which is characterized by self-contained cities similar to those in Europe.

"In these mix-use developments, people live close to where they work. Ideally, the travel time should be cut down to about 23 minutes. The big sprawling megalopolis will become a thing of the past," he said.

Aside from the long travel time and the resulting pollution, other likely influences/challenges that would shape the city of the future are solid waste management, aging population, shrinking of the household size and environmental consciousness.

Palafox stressed that other cities such as Los Angeles and the state of Massachusetts in the United States have learned their lessons and have changed their zoning laws and restrictions as early as 1973 when the oil shock made people more aware of the need to conserve energy.

These places have again learned lessons from Sept. 11 and are now more concerned about fostering the spirit of community and security among neighbors by literally bringing down their walls.

"These progressive cities are learning lessons from 9/11 yet our cities in the Philippines are still using outdated/obsolete laws, codes, restrictions, practices in zoning, urban development from 400 years ago—rigid zoning or exclusionary zoning which have fragmented our cities and disconnected our communities," he said.

The challenges of putting together a plan to build the ideal city of the future is one of the topics that would be discussed in the real estate conference of the National Real Estate Association scheduled on Sept. 27.

Aside from Palafox, other speakers are architect Nestor S. Mangio, HLURB Commissioner Roque A. Magno, Finance Undersecretary Juanita Amatong, Gen. Victor Obillo and Interior Secretary Jose D. Lina Jr.

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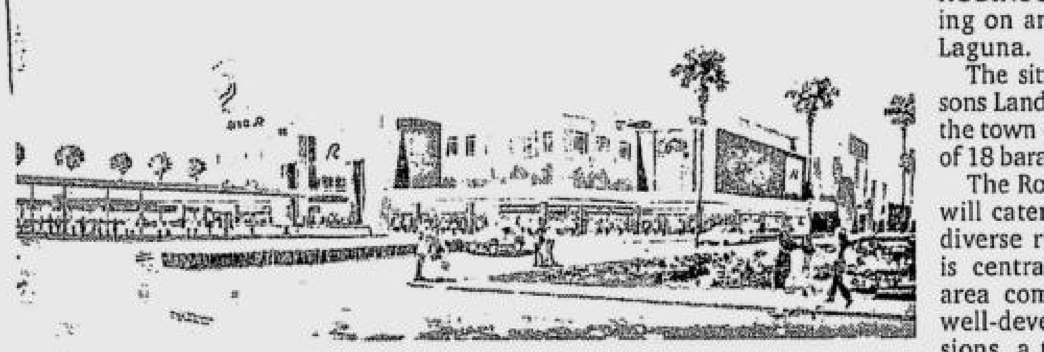
First full-service mall opens in Sta. Rosa, Laguna



Architect's perspective of Robinson's Place Sta. Rosa

ROBINSONS Land Corp. is embarking on another mall development in Laguna.

The site being developed by Robinsons Land is on the national highway in the town of Sta. Rosa, which composed of 18 barangays.

The Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa mall will cater to the needs of a wide and diverse residential market. The mall is centrally located in a catchment area composed of middle-class and well-developed residential subdivisions, a technopark which is host to 80 major global and local manufacturers, schools and universities.

The only full-service mall in Laguna, Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa is expected to be fully operational by last quarter of this year. It will be anchored by three popular retail outlets—the Robinsons Department Store, Big R Supercenter and Handyman Do-It-Best. Robinsons Movieworld and an amusement center are also expected to open in the mall. These outstanding retail formats will be complemented with an array of shops and boutiques, a fast-food center, popular restaurants and fast-food outlets.

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Public warned against antitermite chemical

IF your carpenter tells you the wooden structures in your home are being protected with Chlordane, an expensive antitermite chemical, you have good cause for alarm. Chlordane has long been banned in the country.

According to Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority executive director Jose Maria Perez, the sale and use of Chlordane have been prohibited since 1999.

In the past decades, Chlordane was heavily used as an antitermite chemical treatment by homeowners, construction folk and fishermen until industry experts realized that the chemical was actually a double-edged solution. Since Chlordane has a residual effect that lasts for 50 years or so, homes were protected from termites for a very long time. But this also meant that toxic elements stayed very long in the soil and caused a number of health and environmental problems.

Misuse

The chemical had become famously effective against pests, which led to its misuse—carpenters would mix paint with Chlordane, splattering the mixture on wood to keep termites from gnawing through the structures. But what homeowners and construction people did not know was that the chemical is carcinogenic or could cause cancer.

Didi Gonzales of the Pest Control Association of the Philippines narrates that in the United States, an entire family was evacuated from their home when it was found that their house had been treated with Chlordane. Members of the family were allowed to return only after all affected structures were taken out and replaced.

Chlordane was also proven to be hazardous to the ecosystem. The chemical is nonselective, meaning it kills everything in its path, including beneficial insects like earthworms and centipedes.

Bailey Yu of the Pest Control Products Distributors Association of the Philippines paints a grim scenario: Chlordane is sprayed onto the soil and when it rains, the chemical mixes with rainwater, flows into river systems, and whatever it comes into contact with could die, including fishes. Fishermen who use Chlordane as wood preservative for their boats would paint Chlordane on the bottom of the hull to protect it from barnacles, not knowing that the chemical could affect marine life.

But since Chlordane was banned by the FPA, the chemical is no longer available in the market.

Gonzales explains, "Consumers who buy what they think is Chlordane are being duped. They are not getting their money's worth and are being lulled into a false sense of security because their homes are not really being protected against termites."

Complaints

Pesticides and fertilizers banned in first world countries have no place in the Philippines, Perez insists. "We even receive complaints from multinational companies abroad to the effect that our registration process is very strict. The FPA follows the guidelines of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations World Health Organization. If the chemical does not meet the standards, it cannot be brought in the country."

The agency lists chemicals like Alphacypermethrin, Bifenthrin, Chlorpyrifos and Fenvalerate as alternatives to Chlordane. There is also Sentricon Termite Colony Elimination Systems by Dow AgroSciences that uses Hexaflumuron, a bait which inhibits the growth of termites, causing entire colonies to die. Sentricon was given the "Green Chemistry Award" by the Clinton Administration for its commitment to the environment.

Dr. Dario Sabularse, FPA Deputy Director for Pesticides gives this advice to the public: "We are campaigning for the safe use of pesticides. As a precaution, consumers should buy pest and crop protection products from licensed handlers.

They should inspect the label and check for the FPA registration number. The label is a legal document so whatever is indicated there has technical basis. Of course, consumers should ask for a receipt so they could go back to the store if problems crop up and the FPA can go after erring hardware owners and pest control operators." For questions regarding pesticides, to report fly-by-night pest control operators, or even for tips on how to protect the home against termites, the public may call the FPA hotline at 922-3371.

He concludes, "Consumers should be wary of people who claim to sell or use Chlordane because this chemical has long been out of circulation. What they are selling the public are fake chemicals that will leave homes unprotected against termites."

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One-stop retail shopping offered soon

AFFORDABLE housing developer Empire East Properties Inc. is building a 16-hectare commercial complex as a one-stop retail destination offering a well-rounded shopping experience within its burgeoning Governor's Hills township development in General Trias, Cavite.

Drawing inspiration from the Laguna BelAir Commercial Center in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, Governor's Hills' shopping complex will be a dining and entertainment destination as well.

Once fully developed, the sprawling commercial complex will have specific zones catering to the retail, leisure and service needs of residents of Governor's Hills. It will feature stores selling garments, home furnishings, hardware electronics, as well as fast-food outlets, coffee and deli shops, fine-dining restaurants, supermarkets, convenience stores, bookstores, sports and hobby shops and other leisure centers.

Offering commercial spaces ranging from 160 to 2,500 square meters, the Commercial Center will also have car retail and accessory stores, automotive service centers, car showrooms, gasoline stations, banks, hardware stores and health clinics among its tenants.

Envisioned to be a day-to-night retail and service hub, the Commercial Center will draw continued customer traffic and patronage from the estimated 30,000 residents of Governor's Hills, as well as the employees of the nearby industrial parks and the residents of neighboring Cavite towns. In the evenings, the commercial center will play host to alfresco wining and dining and other entertainment activities.

With a Mexican-Californian-style low-rise architecture, it will offer a trendy shopping ambience complete with wide sidewalks ideal for outdoor events in a park-like setting.

The Center is easily accessible via three major road networks in the south: Governor's Drive, Aguinaldo Highway and Amadeo Drive.

Launched recently were residential phases 7 and 8 of Governor's Hills that feature efficiently designed triplex, duplex and single detached homes.

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
IAEB NO. 015

The Department of Health — Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (DOH-ARMM) hereby invites sealed written bids for the procurement of various hospital and laboratory equipments for the use of government hospitals in Sulu and Basilan, with an approved budget of **Thirty One Million Seven Hundred Ninety Four Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Eight Pesos (PhP31,794,288.00)** chargeable against the Philippines-Canada Development Fund (PCDF).

Only responsible and duly accredited suppliers/ manufacturers/ distributors as certified by the Department of Health Accreditation of Supplier's Committee are qualified to participate for the following hospital equipments:

Package-A (Medical-Surgical-Laboratory Equipments)		
1.1	Ambu bag - Adult	11units
1.2	Ambu bag - Pediatric	11 units
1.3	Autoclave Machine	5 units
1.4	Binocular Microscope	8 sets
1.5	Sphygmomanometer, mercurial	27 sets
1.6	Stand bowl (Super Stainless)	1 pc.
1.7	Centrifuge for Hematocrit, 6 placer	2 units
1.8	Clinical Centrifuge, 8 placer	5 units
1.9	Delivery Room Spotlight	6 units
1.10	Delivery Room Table	7 units
1.11	D and C set	8 units
1.12	ECG Machine	7 units
1.13	Examination Table	2 units
1.14	Plasma Extractor	1 unit
1.15	Hospital Bed Trauma	6 sets
1.16	Infant Bassinet with foam	9 units
1.17	Laryngoscope with handle and blade	15 sets
1.18	Minor Surgical Set	14 sets
1.19	Major Surgical Set	11 sets
1.20	MD II Blood Cell Counter	6 units
1.21	Nebulizer, portable	21 units
1.22	Oxygen Tank with regulator complete acc.	26 units
1.23	Pulse Oximeter	1 unit
1.24	Serological Shaker	2 units
1.25	Sterilizer Instrument - Adult	11 units
1.26	Sterilizer Instrument - Pediatric	11 units
1.27	Stethoscope, dual diap - Adult	15 units
1.27	Stethoscope, dual diap - Pediatric	21 units
1.28	Suction Machine, Heavy	16 units
1.29	Suction Machine, Portable	11 units
1.30	Traction Frame	3 pcs.
1.31	Wheeled Stretcher	19 units
1.32	Food Trolley	2 units
1.33	Hospital Bed	128 units
1.34	Weighing Scale-Pediatric	14 units
1.35	Weighing Scale-Adult	14 units
1.36	Operating Room Light	1 unit
1.37	Laundry and Cleaning Trolley	1 unit
Package-B (Specialized Medical Equipment)		
2.1	Cardiac Monitor with Pulse Oximeter	4 units
Package-C (Specialized Laboratory Equipment I)		
3.1	Chemistry Analyzer	1 unit
Package-D (Specialized Laboratory Equipment 2)		
4.1	Hemoscale Model AB 20	1 unit
Package-E (Specialized Laboratory Equipment 3)		
5.1	LC Hematology Analyzer/Diluter and Thermal Printer	1 unit
Package-F (Specialized Surgical Equipment)		
6.1	Orthopedic Operating Table	3 units
Package-G (Specialized Diagnostic Equipment 1)		
7.1	Ultrasound Machine w/ Dynamic Imaging	4 units
Package-H (Specialized Diagnostic Equipment 2)		
8.1	X-ray Machine	3 units
Package-I (Dental Equipments)		
9.1	Dental X-ray Machine	3 sets
9.2	Surgical Dental Instruments	7 sets
9.3	Restorative Dental Instruments	1 set
9.4	Dental Chair	7 units
9.5	Light Cure Unit	3 units
9.6	Ultrasonic Scaler	1 unit
Package-J (Other Equipments)		
10.1	Diesel Generator, 25 KVA	2 units
10.2	Diesel Generator, 5 KVA	2 units

Interested eligible bidders may obtain the bidding documents and further information at the DOH-ARMM Regional Supply Office from September 25 to October 7, 2002, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.

A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders upon payment of Two Thousand Pesos (PhP2,000.00) non-refundable fee and upon submission of authenticated DOH-Supplier's Accreditation Certificate.

A Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on October 8, 2002, 9:00 a.m. at DOH-ARMM Training Center.

Sealed bids must be received at the address below on or before 10:00 a.m. of October 23, 2002. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form of cash, manager's check or surety bond callable upon demand, issued by a surety or insurance company accredited by the Insurance Commission, in accordance with the following schedule:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for each Package
1. Cash or Manager's Check	One Percent (1%)
2. Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2-1/2%)

Bid opening, examination and evaluation will be held on October 23, 2002, 2:00 p.m. until completed at the DOH-ARMM Training Center in the presence of participating bidders or their duly authorized representatives.

All documents should be submitted to: **The Chairman, Regional Procurement, Bids and Awards Committee, DOH-ARMM, ORC Compound, Cotabato City.**

The Department of Health-ARMM reserves the right to accept or reject any bid or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect and informality found therein, to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at anytime prior to award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform them of the grounds of the DOH-ARMM's action and to award the contract or any part thereof to the bidder whose proposal as evaluated, is most advantageous to the Government.

By Authority of the Regional Secretary of Health

Sgd. OMAR L. MATUAN
Administrative Officer V
Chairman, Regional Procurement, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Sept. 24 & Oct. 1, 2002)

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Pambansang Pangasiwaan ng Patubig
(NATIONAL IRRIGATION ADMINISTRATION)
Lungsod ng Quezon

INVITATION TO BID
Bid No. LCPIS-032-02

The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) invites interested bidders to participate in the bidding for the Supply and Delivery of the following:

One (1) unit Industrial Diesel Engine, radiator cooled, 4 cycle, turbo charged, direct injection, 265 HP (minimum), 1800 rpm (maximum) with PTO thru friction clutch with control lever

Four (4) units RAGD, ratio 3:100, HP min rating at 1.5 service factor in excess of pump HP, with non-reverse coupling

Said items shall be used in the prosecution of Libmanan-Cabusao Pump Irrigation System, Camarines Sur. The Approved Agency Budget is P3,800,000. Any bid that is above the Approved Agency Budget shall be automatically disqualified.

All bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security equivalent in % of the Approved Budget in any of the following forms:

1. Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	- One Percent (1%)
2. Bank Guaranty	- One and a half percent (1 1/2%)
3. Surety Bond callable on demand	- Two and a half percent (2 1/2%)

Accreditation form may be secured from 23-30 September 2002 at the Procurement Division, Ground Floor, NIA, Quezon City, Tel. No. 921-3906.

Bid Documents shall be issued to accredited bidders starting 30 September to 11 October 2002 upon payment of non-refundable amount of Two Thousnd Pesos (P2,000) at the same address.

Pre-bid shall be on 17 October 2002, 2:00 PM at the Conference Room of the Systems Operation Equipment Management (SOEM) 4th Floor, IEC Bldg., NIA Compound, Quezon City.

Bids shall be opened on 24 October 2002, 2:00 PM at the same venue.

NIA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure, to waive any or all informalities and make award where it may deem proper for the advantage of the government.

(Sgd.) ISIDRO R. DIGAL
Chairman

(PDI--Sept. 24, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC)
City Government of Cabanatuan

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

Date: September 24, 2002

1. The City Government of Cabanatuan invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of Materials, Labor and Equipment for the proposed construction of the Cesar F. Vergara Bridge, details are as follows:

Location. Barangays Sumacab Norte and Talipapa, City of Cabanatuan
General Description: Length 510.80 lm
Carriageway: 10.50 m w/ 2 - 0.76 m sidewalk
No. of Span: 17 @ 30 lm/span
Superstructure: Reinforced Concrete Deck Slab on P/S Type IV B Girder
Substructure: Bored Piles (2 - 1.80 diameter/ pier-abutment)
Source of Fund: Locally Funded
Required PCAB Registration and Classification: "AAA" with specialization on Bridge Construction

2. Bidding documents may be purchased at the Office of the BAC Secretariat, City Planning and Development Office (CPDO), City Hall, Cabanatuan City for a non-refundable fee of Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) which are available during office hours from October 15 to November 15, 2002. Interested qualified bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
3. Deadline for submission of Pre-qualification Statements shall be on or before November 29, 2002.
4. Pre-bid conference will be held at the Conference Room, City Mayor's Office, City Hall, Cabanatuan City on November 29, 2002 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.
5. Bids shall be valid for a period of 90 days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security of not less than two and one-half percent (2.5%) of the bid price in the form of Cash, Cashier's/Manager's Check or Irrevocable Letter of Credit from a reputable Bank, and shall be delivered to the above mentioned address on or before 10:00 a.m., 20 December 2002, at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
6. The Employer reserves the right to accept or reject any bids, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders or any obligation to inform the affected Bidder or Bidders of the grounds for the Employer's action.
7. The proposed construction of the Cesar F. Vergara Bridge shall be implemented thru a turn-key scheme

(SGD.) JULIUS CESAR V. VERGARA
City Mayor

(PDI--Sept. 24, Oct. 1 & 8, 2002)

Republic of the Philippines
Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee (PBAC)
City Government of Cabanatuan

INVITATION TOLEASE

Date: September 24, 2002

1. In line with the policy of the State to encourage the private sector as the nation's main engine for gowth and development, the Local Government of Cabanatuan City would like to pursue the same principle by offering some assets for privatization. Thus, we are offering the private sector the opportunity to operate and manage our City Transport Terminal.

Pursuant City Resolution No. 312-2001 dated December 19, 2001 and City Resolution No. 291-2002 dated July 10, 2002 the City Government of Cabanatuan is offering the public to lease our City Transport Terminal. The said terminal is located in a 2.5-hectare commercial lot along Circumferential Road and it houses the following:

- 30 bus berths
- 56 mini-bus berths
- 58 jeepney berths
- 160 units Commercial Stalls for dry goods
- 80 units Commercial Stalls for fruit and vegetable section
- 36 units Commercial Stalls for meat section
- 21 units Commercial Stalls for fish section
- 30 units of Office and Commercial spaces
- 78 units of Wholesale Market spaces
- Parking Spaces for 14 buses, 90 mini-buses, and 58 jeepneys/private vehicles

2. Terms and Conditions:

Term: 25 years
Goodwill: Php 25,000,000.00 Non-Refundable
Advance Payment: Php 22,000,000.00 as advance rental
Annual Rental: *PhP 22,000,000.00 to be divided and paid equally on a monthly basis

3. Interested parties must submit their expression of interest together with documents detailing their financial capability.
4. Document must be contained in a sealed envelope properly identified as "LETTER OF INTENT TO LEASE THE CITY TRANSPORT TERMINAL" to the Office of the PBAC Secretariat, City Planning and Development Office (CPDO), City Hall, Cabanatuan City on or before October 31, 2002

(SGD.) JULIUS CESAR V. VERGARA
City Mayor

(PDI--Sept. 24, Oct. 1 & 8, 2002)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The National Housing Authority is inviting offers to purchase as Second Tender, by way of sealed bids, the following commercial properties on an "As Is - Where Is" basis:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE	TERMS
26-27	2 lots, 812 & 813 sqm. For individual titling	Phase II B, Karangalan VII Pasig	PhP10,000.00/ sq.m.	Installment Maximum of 10 years
28	1 lot, 1,000 sqm. With TCT	Lot 11, Blk. C2-IN GMA, Cavite	4,000.00/sq.m.	Cash
29	5-door, 2 storey Apartment Building on a 230 sq.m. lot	Lot 6, Blk. 89 Hermosa Street, San Francisco Del Monte, Quezon City	2,900,000.00	Cash

Interested parties may purchase one/any or all the lots offered, details of which may be secured for a non-refundable fee of PhP200.00 from the Commercial & Industrial Bids and Awards Committee (COINBAC), c/o CIED, Mezzanine Floor, NHA Building, Elliptical Road, Quezon City. For inquiry, please call Evelyn V. Ramos or Neil A. Subido at the ff. tel. nos.: 922-3001, 923-0390, 926-4561 loc. 302-303.

	SCHEDULE	
A.	*Submission of Pre-qualification Requirements*	Sept. 23 to Sept. 27, 2002 until 5 p.m. CIED Mezzanine Floor NHA Building, Quezon City
B.	*Pre-Bid Conference*	September 26, 2002 (Thursday) 2:30 p.m., Operations Center 3rd Floor, NHA Building
C.	*Submission of Sealed Bids*	September 30, 2002 (Monday) up to 12 noon, Operations Center 3rd floor, NHA Building
D.	*Opening of Bids*	September 30, 2002 (Monday) 1:30 p.m., Operations Center 3rd Floor, NHA Building

The NHA reserves the right to reject any or all bid offers or any part thereof or to waive any required formalities and accept offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) JOSEPH PETER S. SISON
Assistant General Manager
& Chairman, COINBAC

(PDI--Sept. 21 & 24, 2002)

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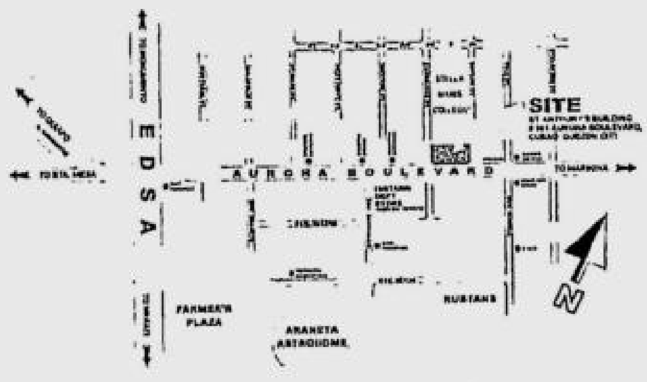

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Blessed Josemaria Escriva, The Forge, pt 1036

MONINA "MONETTE" REYES LUISTRO

December 17, 1957—September 23, 2002
Peacefully joined her Creator, receiving the comforts of her faith

Her husband **Tony**, children **Guia**, **Cholo**, **Mikki**, **Abby** & **Javy**, mother, **Linda**, brother **Nilo**, sisters, **Lizette**, **Josette**, **Baby** & **Nene**, all her in-laws, relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Jesus, the Divine Healer Church, Tahanan Village, Bgy. BF Parañaque.

Interment will be on September 26, 2002 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

Queridissima Mamang
Váya con Díos, con todo nuestro amor y nuestra devocíon

Doña Isabelita Cuadra vda. de Torrillo

Nacio - 17 Abril 1914
Fallecio - 21 Septiembre 2002

Sus desconsolados híjas e híjos **Isabelita** e Luis (†), **Zenaida** y Carmelo (†), **Alfonso** y Neonancia, **Josephine** y Bayani, y **Leonardo** e Isoda, su hermano Alberto Cuadra (†), su hermana Lucita Francisco (†) sus nietos y nietas a saber **Leo** y Myra, **Len**, **Bambino** y Shirley, **Renato** y Tess, **Beth**, **Humphrey** y Portia, **Joey** y Ester, **Jacqueline** y, Jenny **Horacio** y BecBec, **Martin** y Vivian, **Cherrie Pie** y Egay, **Gugoy**, **Bibit** y Baby y **Hen**, **Brahmie** y Grace, **Mary Rose** y Francis, y sus gran nietos y gran nietas, sus parientes, amigas y su Yaya Adela suplíca a todos que ruegue piadóssamante por su álma.

La Santa Misa se celebra todos los dias en Arlington Memorial Chapels desde el 21 hasta el 27 de Septiembre, alas ocho por la noche (8:00 p.m.).

El entierro será el Sabado, 28 Septiembre 2002, en Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City despúes dela Santa Misa alas dos de la tarde (2:00 p.m.) en San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish Church, Quezon City.

In Loving Memory Of

EDGARDO SANTIAGO ISIP

Who died in the Grace of our Lord on September 20, 2002 at the age of 51.

His loving mother, wife & children, brothers & sisters, sisters-in-law & brothers-in-law, nieces & nephews & grandchildren would like to thank friends & relatives who supported them during their time of bereavement.

His body lies in state at Baltazar Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (Inside Manila Memorial Park), Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Sept. 26. Thursday at 2 p.m.

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF

Adoracion "Lily" Bautista-Baranda

November 7, 1932-September 24, 2001

On the first anniversary of her death, her children, May, Nilo and **Robert**, son-in-law **Philip** and grandchildren **Darryl** and **Kitty**, request the pious readers, friends and relatives to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Mass will be offered at the following locations:

San Roque Parish Mandaluyong	6:00 a.m.
Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, Baclaran	6:30 a.m.
Baranda Residence, No. 8 Road 2 Mandaluyong	7:00 p.m.

Our Dearly Beloved

Teofila Belen Pantua-Doroin

Ayala Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on September 21, 2002 at the age of 71.

Her loving children and their spouses **Bing & Danny**, **Antonio & Evelyn**, **Sylvia & Oscar**, **Maribel & Ricardo**, **Concepcion & Eusebio**, and **Clarissa & John**; grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at St. Jerome Emiliani Church, Alabang Town Center, Alabang-Zapote Road, Muntinlupa City, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Wednesday, September 25, 2002 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque, Metro Manila after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

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Our Dearly Beloved

Erma Osea Claro

Naga City
(Formerly Asst. Regional Director of DSWD V)

Peacefully joined her Creator, the Great Healer on 20 September 2002 at the age of 52.

Her loving husband **Domingo "Boy" F. Claro**; her daughter **Chinkee**; son-in-law **Adam Sia**; her sons **Jec** and **Noel**; father **Salvador V. Osea, Sr.**; brothers and sisters, in-laws, nieces and nephews, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Chapel of the University of Nueva Caceres, Naga City. Interment will be on Saturday, 28 September 2002 after the 2:00 p.m. Mass of the Resurrection at the Basilica Minore of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, Naga City.

In lieu of flowers, donations for the Missionaries of the Poor (Queen of Peace), her "Little Angels" and the Holy Rosary Preparatory Seminary will be appreciated.

Our Dearly Beloved

MARLENE AGUILA-TUNGALA

of Libacao, Aklan and Cabatuan, Iloilo

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on September 19, 2002 at the age of 62.

*Her loving husband **Nelson, Sr**; sons and their spouses **Neil Oliver** and **Dissa**, **Nelson, Jr.**, **Rex**, **Ariel** and **Menchu**; grandson **James Daniel**; relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.*

Her body lies in state at the family residence at L.J. Ledesma Subdivision, Phase I, Buhang, Jaro, Iloilo City.

Interment will be on Sunday, September 29, 2002 at the Iloilo Memorial Park, Balantang, Jaro, Iloilo City after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at the Our Lady of Montserrat Parish Church, Gran Plains Subdivision, Jaro, Iloilo City.

ABELARDO GAMBOA JARDENIL

of Jaro, Iloilo City

Peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord on September 19, 2002 at the age of 84.

The body lies in state at A. Porras Memorial Chapel in La Paz, Iloilo City. Funeral Mass will be held on September 25, 2002 at 2:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage Catholic Church in La Paz, Iloilo City. Interment will follow at Green Garden Memorial Park in Jaro, Iloilo City.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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BUSINESS

PNB cuts net loss forecast

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank said yesterday it was on track to recording a net loss lower than its P2.9-billion target for the whole year.

"(Our full-year net loss) would be lower than what I said (it would be)," PNB president Lorenzo Tan told reporters during ceremonies marking the 20th year since the bank introduced the country's first automated teller machine.

PNB's net loss in the first six months of the year stood at P1.4 billion, substantially lower than the P3.9 billion it lost in the same period last year.

Tan said PNB's losses were lower than expected because the bank was able to cut costs, adjust fees and tap more income from remittances and loans.

PNB is hoping to return to profitability in four years by disposing of its bad assets or eking out returns from large idle assets, increasing revenues from remittances and raising margins through technology.

Tan disclosed that PNB sold some P1.5 billion worth of assets so far this year, well above expectations. Approved sales have amounted to P1.8 billion, mainly involving residential units.

The bank has assumed that its lending will not grow in the first two years of its rehabilitation plan.

Tan said the bank would still strive to bring down its non-performing loan ratio from 50 percent to 39 percent by year's end.

PNB is also aiming to set up six new remittance offices overseas by the end of this year, he said. The bank already has offices in Maryland and Vancouver.

Last year, the bank posted a net loss of P4.1 billion and similar substantial losses in previous years.

Companies owned by tobacco tycoon Lucio Tan and the government each owns 45 percent of PNB.

In May, Tan and the government agreed to settle P25 billion in outstanding loans to the central bank and state-owned Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. *Elena R. Torrijos*

PSBank looking to buy P2B in loan portfolios

THE PHILIPPINE Savings Bank, thrift unit of Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., is on the look out to acquire P2 billion in consumer loan portfolios, PSBank president Pascual Garcia said yesterday.

In a news briefing, Garcia said the bank was also planning to open 17 new branches in the next 12 to 18 months. It currently has 103 branches.

"We're looking to acquire more branches," Garcia told reporters.

He also said the bank would "continue to search for opportunities to acquire loan portfolios, especially those related to auto, mortgages and personal loans."

The bank is in the market for portfolios smaller than P2 billion, but these will have to be in the market segments that the bank is targeting, Garcia said.

Garcia also expressed confidence that PSBank would post a more than 50-percent increase in net income this year from the P175-million profit it recorded last year.

"Our outlook for next year is positive," he added.

PSBank's first-half income amounted to P144 million, 83 percent better than the P65.5 million it chalked up in the same period last year.

Garcia disclosed that the bank's loan portfolio had grown by close to 15 percent and deposits had also expanded at a faster pace.

PSBank is now the country's second-largest thrift bank, with total resources of P24.8 billion as of end-June this year or 37 percent more than last year.

Last year, it acquired 13 branches from Global Business Bank and two more in May.

Since then, Global Business Bank has been fully absorbed by parent Metrobank.

Local investors buying more dollar debt papers

By Clarissa S. Batino

LOCAL investors, including banks and government financial institutions, have increased their holdings of Philippine dollar-denominated debt papers by 8 percent to $5.4 billion as of June.

This has been helping ease pressure created by the country's rising public debts, experts say.

Still, critics believe the country's total debts, amounting to more than 60 percent of the economy, have been growing uncontrollably.

Data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed that investments in foreign-denominated government debt papers went up from about $5 billion in the first quarter to $5.4 billion in the second quarter.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the central bank recorded a $397-million increase in the investments of individuals and groups in Philippine dollar-debt papers.

Tetangco explained that the higher exposure of local investors to Philippine government and corporate borrowings had helped ease the country's external liabilities, as these were subtracted from the total debt stock that stood at $54.9 billion as of end-June.

Out of the total $5.4-billion exposure, Philippine dollar-debt papers held by private and public groups and individuals accounted for $3.1 billion as of the first six months of the year, according to Tetangco.

The level of local investments in dollar-denominated Philippine papers is seen increasing further in the coming months, as the government has said it will go back to foreign markets to raise more funds.

The remaining $2.3 billion were foreign bonds issued by local, mostly blue chip, companies like the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., Globe Telecom Inc. and JG Summit Holdings Inc.

Market experts said almost half of $300 million worth of five-year bonds listed in the Luxembourg Stock Exchange early this month was bought by local investors.

HSBC Corp. treasurer John McGowan agreed that there had been a marked increase in the exposure of local investors to Philippine government and privately issued debt papers since last year, when Philippine dollar-debt papers and Philippine corporate bond issues were performing well in the foreign markets.

McGowan said investors had been flocking to the foreign debt issues of the Philippines as an option to maximize their placements while domestic interest rates remained generally modest.

"There are still lots of liquidity in the local market and much of this goes into the peso and dollar bonds," McGowan said.

Former BSP Governor Gabriel Singson said in an earlier interview that Philippine bonds had become the new investment outlet for local banks, as credit prospects remained hampered by a huge level of bad accounts and local interest rates remained low.

Since last year, the government has been taking advantage of an increased appetite for Philippine dollar bonds among local and foreign investors. This year alone, the government has sold more than $2 billion worth of foreign bonds.

In 2003, the government said it would borrow about $2.4 billion to finance an estimated P142-billion deficit.

Partners take the long, winding road to success

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

ONE of Novecento's outlets. The store has focused on offering European-style clothes for men.

MERLE Tiongson and Jon Dona had always wanted to be entrepreneurs, but they took the long and winding road to that dream.

First, they each put in more than 10 years in the garments business, working for local firms that exported clothes to the world's leading fashion houses as merchandisers, buyers and operations managers.

Then, the partners went into real estate, selling land initially to the same people they were dealing with in the garments business.

Working for other people and selling real estate, however, proved to be invaluable in the end.

Merle's and Jon's exposure to the best suppliers in the Philippines and buyers in Europe honed their skills in spotting the best quality apparel, while real estate provided them with the P1 million they needed to finally put up Novecento at the third level of the Shoppesville Arcade in Greenhills in 1996.

Novecento was a name they picked out of an Italian fashion magazine.

The small outlet initially sold high-end imported clothing from the United States and Europe, but the currency crisis that hit the region in 1998 caused import prices to shoot up, putting their high-end clothes out of the reach of Novecento's market.

Left with really no other choice, they took their store concept further and decided to produce their own kind of clothes in 2001—a line of men's clothing that followed the latest in European design—putting their combined expertise to the test.

It also marked Novecento's expansion from Greenhills to Glorietta 2 in May 2001 and Greenbelt 1 in December of the same year.

SUCCESS STORY

Merle took care of choosing the designs, fabric and subcontractors to execute the designs, while Jon handled production from pattern-making to finishing and quality control.

"We were lucky because we were able to establish good relationships with the suppliers abroad that we used to deal with in our old jobs, so we had access to good fabric and materials. We believe this gives us an edge," Merle says.

Production is made entirely in Manila through subcontractors that Merle and Jon have dealt with frequently in their previous jobs.

They have always subscribed to the view that Filipino workers can match and even surpass quality production standards of European fashion houses.

"We insist on quality because it is hard for us to sell something we don't believe in and since we have always been exposed to the best, we followed the same practice in our own brand," Jon says.

Novecento has concentrated on European design not only because Merle and Jon are more knowledgeable about the market but also because they believe that it suits the Filipino better than American designs.

"American style is more loose, unlike European design, which is more contoured and a perfect fit to the Filipino physique, which is more lean than the Americans," Merle said.

They also decided to concentrate on men's fashion because they noticed a growing demand for European-style clothing at affordable prices, and they stood a better chance of succeeding in men's fashion because it was not as saturated as the market for women's fashion.

"The turnover is also longer in men's fashion, which is about three to six months unlike in women's fashion where the design has to be changed sometimes in less than a month," Merle says.

Novecento targets the upwardly mobile Filipino male who is trendy but is on the lookout for the best value for their money. This market also looks for clothes that are versatile, meaning can be used from morning to night.

A Novecento shirt sells for about P650, which can be compared to shirts in Hugo Boss that sell for at least P2,000. Its jackets cost P2,500, while a comparable jacket in a foreign house sells for P18,000.

Merle, however, emphasizes that a more affordable shirt does not mean that the quality is less than the foreign house. She says they pay close attention to quality just as they always have even when they were still working for other people.

"The difficulty really is in convincing people that we can produce clothes just as well as foreign brands and at a fraction of the cost. The truth is, we really can and we want to prove it through our store," Merle says.

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

For feedback, text us at (0918)917-5026 or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Yoga becoming a competitive sport

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

YOGA is definitely this year's hottest fitness trend. It has become the "in" thing to do. Most yoga experts see this as a positive development because the benefits of yoga are now being enjoyed by the masses. And while it's true that many yoga wannabes are attracted because they want bodies like those of celebrity advocates Madonna and model Christy Turlington, yoga teachers hope that students will eventually see the discipline as more than just exercise and experience its other mind-body-spirit benefits.

The teachers are not too happy though about a very un-yoga-like attitude that is rearing its ugly head—competitiveness.

This dark side of yoga was one of the topics discussed during the two-day Idea Yoga Conference held in July in San Diego, California. It has been identified as a major cause of yoga-related injuries.

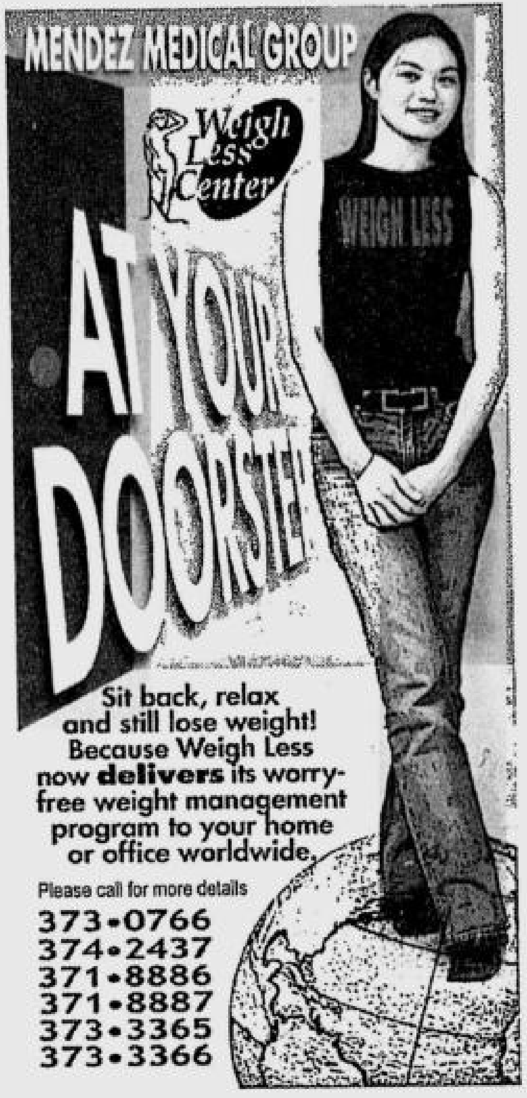
Many of the presenters at the conference, yoga veterans since the '60s, noticed that the "no pain, no gain" mindset of the gym had spread to the yoga class. Compounding the problem was the fact that many fitness instructors and students alike were flocking to the more athletic and aggressive styles of power yoga and Ashtanga. People drawn to this type of yoga are usually already competitive and enjoy pushing themselves to the edge.

More injured students

Mark Stephens, a Los Angeles-based yoga instructor, told The New York Times that he used to see one student in 30 classes with a yoga-related injury. Now he sees one in five. He notes, "In the past people were drawn to

YOGA/ p.C3

> Where before the mind-body-spirit connection was the paramount objective, today the motivations are vigorous workout and a great body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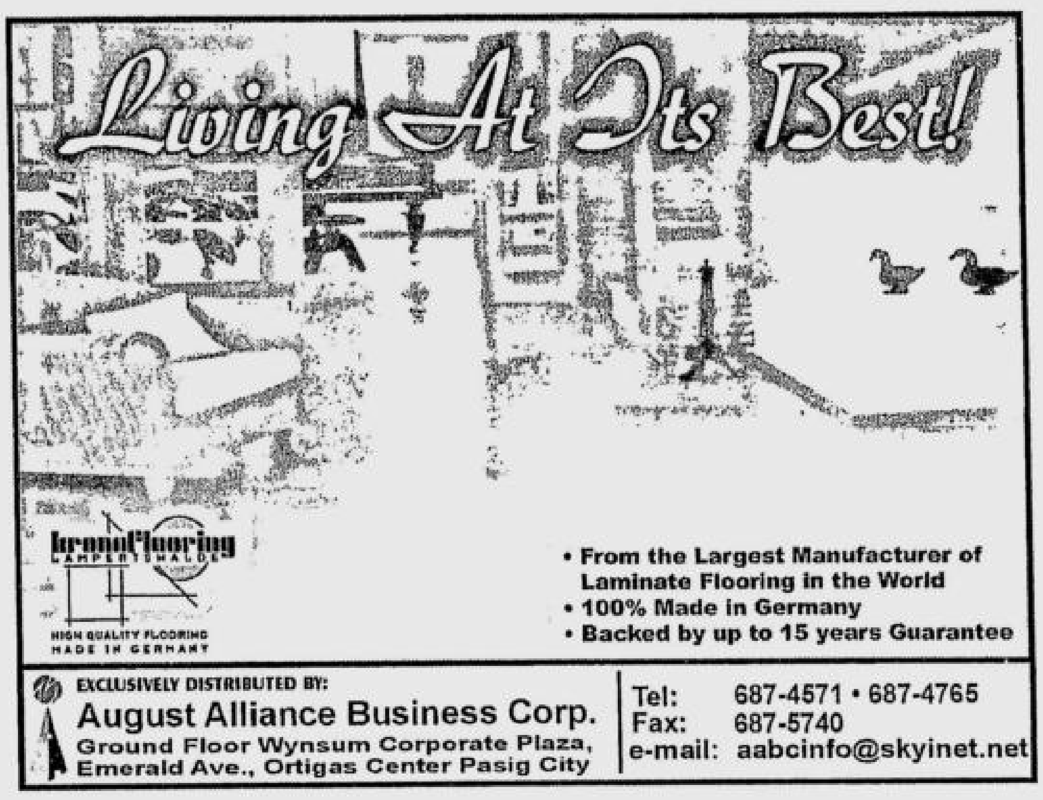
415-93-78
ARIVA WATER HEATERS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MANILA
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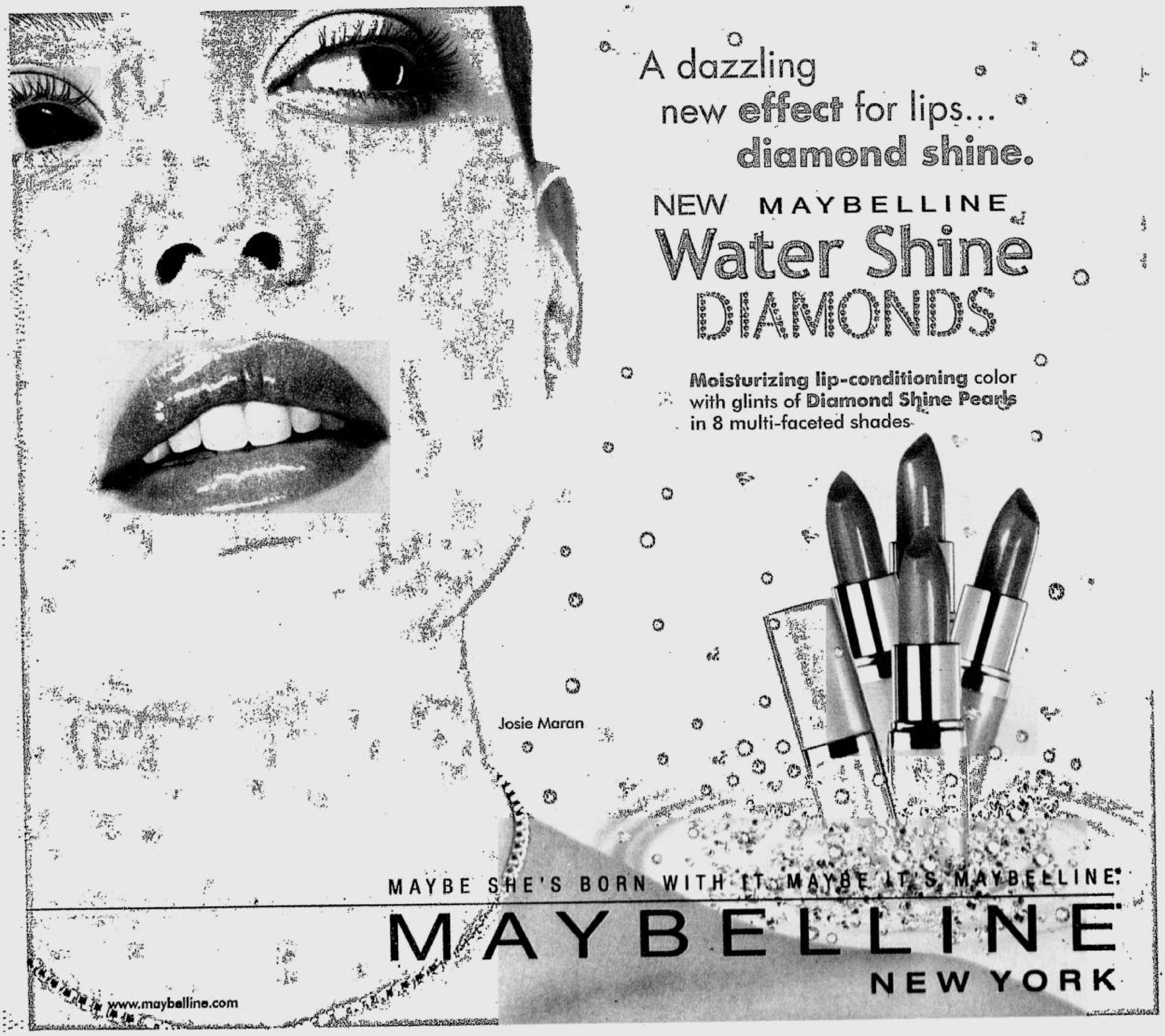
Midland Plaza Hotel,
M. Adriato St, Ermita Manila
QUEZON CITY
24 Mahusay St.,
cor. Maginhawa St.,
UP Village Diliman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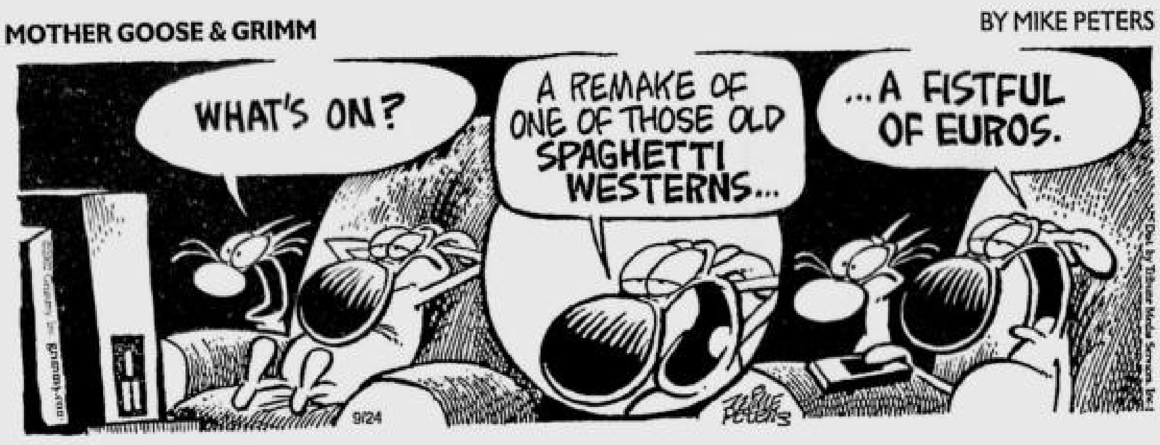
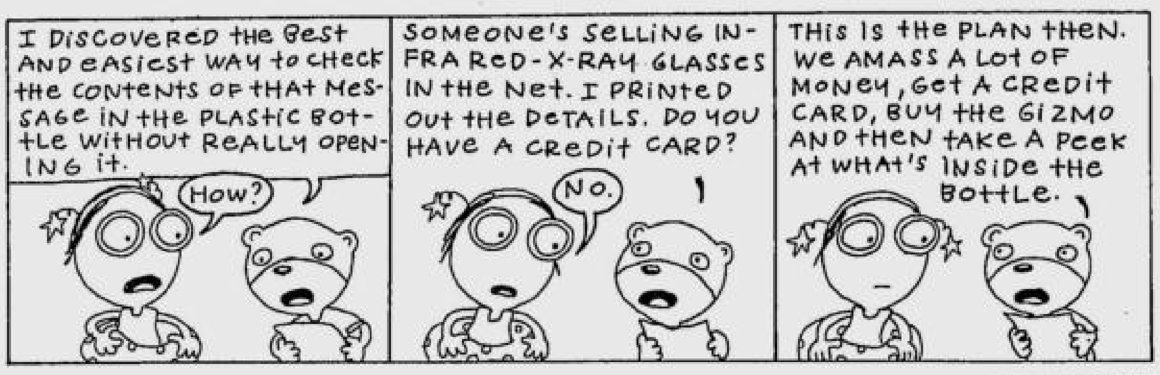
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


WHAT'S ON?
A REMAKE OF ONE OF THOSE OLD SPAGHETTI WESTERNS...
...A FISTFUL OF EUROS.
9/24

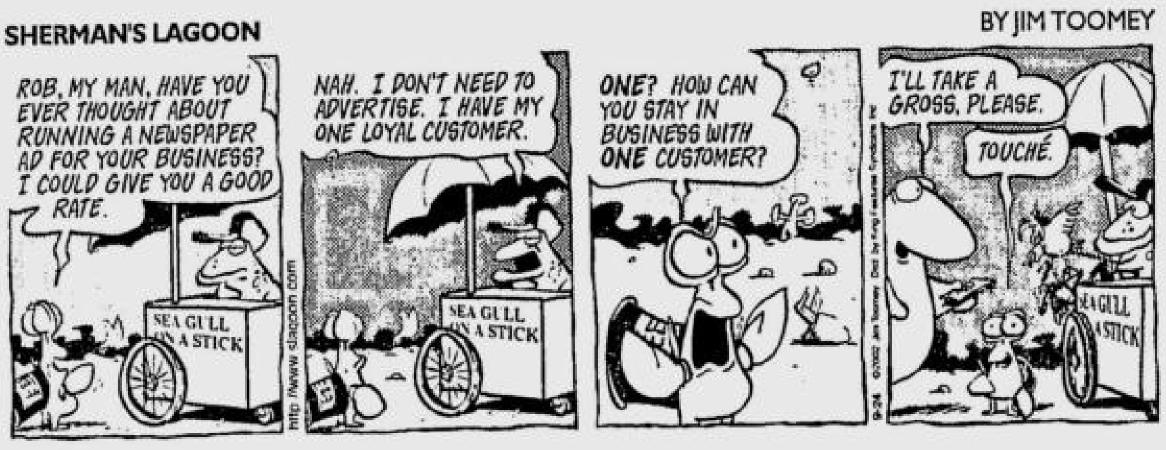
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I DISCOVERED THE BEST AND EASIEST WAY TO CHECK THE CONTENTS OF THAT MESSAGE IN THE PLASTIC BOTTLE WITHOUT REALLY OPENING IT.
HOW?
SOMEONE'S SELLING INFRA RED-X-RAY GLASSES IN THE NET. I PRINTED OUT THE DETAILS. DO YOU HAVE A CREDIT CARD?
NO.
THIS IS THE PLAN THEN. WE AMASS A LOT OF MONEY, GET A CREDIT CARD, BUY THE GIZMO AND THEN TAKE A PEEK AT WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOTTLE.

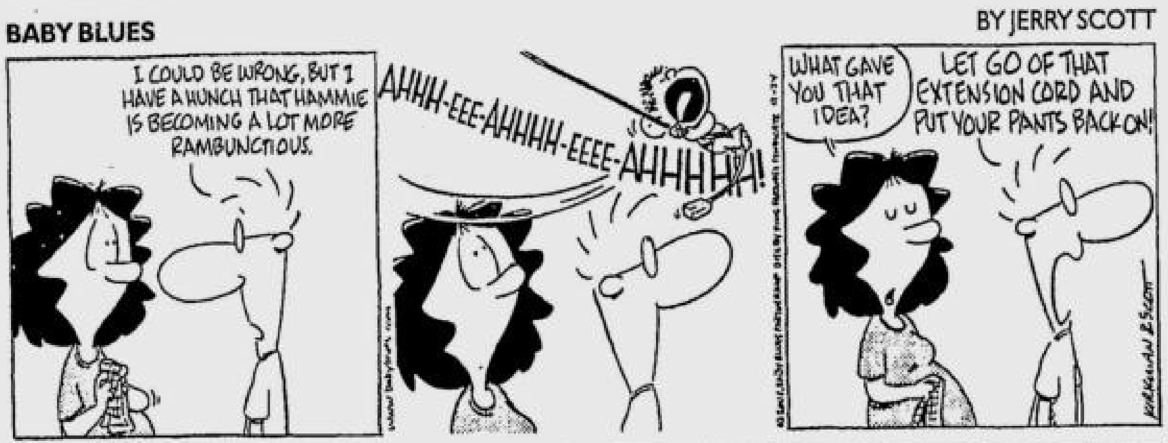
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


ROB, MY MAN, HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT RUNNING A NEWSPAPER AD FOR YOUR BUSINESS? I COULD GIVE YOU A GOOD RATE.
SEA GULL ON A STICK
NAH. I DON'T NEED TO ADVERTISE. I HAVE MY ONE LOYAL CUSTOMER.
ONE? HOW CAN YOU STAY IN BUSINESS WITH ONE CUSTOMER?
I'LL TAKE A GROSS, PLEASE.
TOUCHÉ.
http://www.slagoon.com

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I COULD BE WRONG, BUT I HAVE A HUNCH THAT HAMMIE IS BECOMING A LOT MORE RAMBUNCTIOUS.
AHHH-EEE-AHHHH-EEEE-AHHHHH!
WHAT GAVE YOU THAT IDEA?
LET GO OF THAT EXTENSION CORD AND PUT YOUR PANTS BACK ON!

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Terry Metcalf, Phil Hartman, Linda McCartney

Happy Birthday: Take things in stride this year and move swiftly in a direction that will benefit you. It's a year for you to stop worrying so much about what everyone else is doing and start to put yourself first. Challenge yourself and you will end up gaining the most ground this year. Do what you feel is best for you. Your numbers are 9, 15, 23, 36, 40, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Money may be an issue today if you have been shortsighted regarding your cash flow. If you are thinking about changing your direction, sit tight for the time being and spend time picking up new skills.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your mind will be wandering today, so position yourself so that you don't have to accomplish a whole lot. You will be in the mood to expand your mind and talk to people who can broaden your horizons.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Things may not be as they appear. Don't be too quick to put your money on the line. Unforeseen bills or expenses will take you by surprise.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You'll be more concerned with others today than you will be with yourself. You have a great memory and your past experience should help you to give others the right advice.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You will have a hard time holding on to your cash today. Don't take on other people's responsibilities, and don't offer to pick up the tab if you are out in a group.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Opportunities to travel must be taken advantage of. Sitting back and thinking about travel will not suffice. You will attract people who can offer you food for thought.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): If you become consumed with greed or getting as much as you can for the least amount, you can expect to lose in the end. Put your time and energy into self-improvement.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Partnership problems may emerge today if you haven't been paying proper attention. Your attitude will make it difficult to compromise and could lead to uncertainties within your relationship.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You will discover that you can accomplish a whole lot more if you are practical and well-prepared. Some of the younger people in your life may rely on you for guidance.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Put some time aside to pamper yourself. You've been working hard and deserve to take care of any personal needs or desires that you might have.

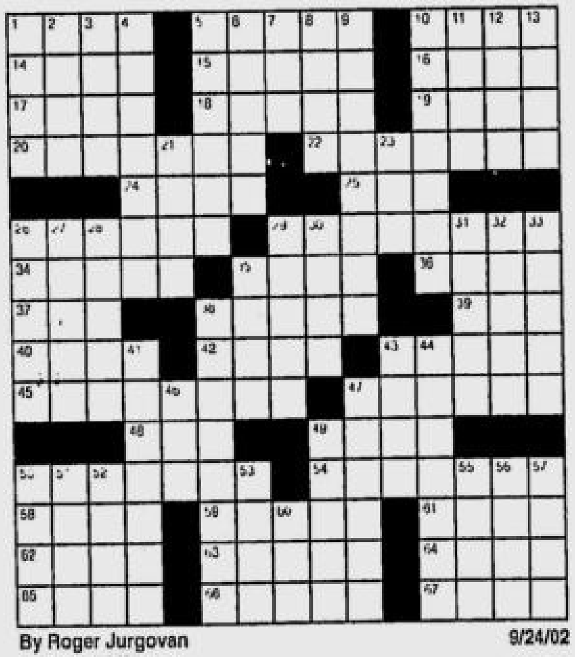
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't underestimate someone who is close to you. You'll be surprised at how observant this person really is. Changes in your personal life may not be to your liking.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): The information coming your way today should spark enthusiasm to push some of the ideas that you've been mulling over. Communication and travel should be on your agenda. Don't be afraid to get what you want in life. You know you deserve it.

Birthday Baby: You will be bright, compassionate and hard-headed when it comes to fighting for the underdog. You will be the grand master when it comes to mediating and bringing harmony to any situation that come your way.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Roger Jurgovan
Potomac, MD

9/24/02

ACROSS
1 Pauper's plea
5 Play part
10 Unsettles
14 Mob melee
15 Leslie of "Gigi"
16 Toward shelter
17 Part of a plot?
18 Apprehension
19 Third power
20 Best Actor, "Life is Beautiful"
22 Best Actor, "The French Connection"
24 Understands
25 Negatives
26 Unattractive
29 Best Actress, "Room at the Top"
34 Separated
35 Gloomy effect
36 Russian river
37 D.C. VIP
38 Best Actor, "It Happened One Night"
39 Combine
40 H.S. dance
42 Fire-sale caveat
43 Swiftly
45 Best Actress, "Dead Man Walking"
47 Flora
48 Joke
49 Verbal
50 Best Actor, "The King and I"
54 Best Actor, "Lilies of the Field"
58 Pelee's output
59 Poison
61 Eternal City
62 Uniform
63 Regretting
64 Singer Redding
65 Lucy's mate
66 Affirmatives
67 Power unit

DOWN
1 Part of U.A.E.
2 Parasitic insects
3 Dawn 'til noon
4 Best Actor, "In the Heat of the Night"
5 Meager
6 Celestial dog
7 Work unit
8 Snack
9 Twist together
10 Best Actress, "Women in Love"
11 Grad
12 Singer McEntire
13 Observed
21 Yiddish money
23 Swindle
26 Window catches
27 La Scala show
28 Landed estate
29 Polio vaccine developer
30 Woes
31 Staff again
32 Dislodge?
33 Levies
35 El __, TX
38 Contraptions
41 Best Actress, "The Rose Tattoo"
43 Jai __
44 Best Actress, "Shakespeare in Love"
46 Bobbsey twin
47 Tines
49 Spout thoughts
50 Used leeches
51 Great review
52 Actor Montand
53 Black sheep
55 Jot
56 Issue forth
57 Break
60 Greek letters

Monday's Puzzle Solved

R	A	D	A	R	■	O	B	I	T	■	C	O	B	B
E	I	E	I	O	■	D	A	N	A	■	L	U	A	U
S	T	U	M	B	L	I	N	G	B	L	O	C	K	S
I	C	C	■	B	O	N	G	O	■	A	S	H	E	S
T	H	E	S	E	S	■	S	T	A	R	E	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	R	E	A	■	■	L	E	S	S	E	N
A	L	A	I	■	■	D	R	I	E	D	■	O	L	E
C	O	L	L	I	S	I	O	N	C	O	U	R	S	E
T	O	T	■	B	A	N	C	O	■	■	L	E	A	D
S	T	O	L	I	D	■	■	N	O	T	A	■	■	■
■	■	■	A	D	A	N	O	■	P	E	N	P	A	L
A	W	A	R	E	■	A	L	L	E	N	■	H	R	E
M	A	X	I	M	U	M	S	E	C	U	R	I	T	Y
O	L	L	A	■	S	E	E	N	■	R	E	L	E	T
S	T	E	T	■	E	D	N	A	■	E	C	O	L	E

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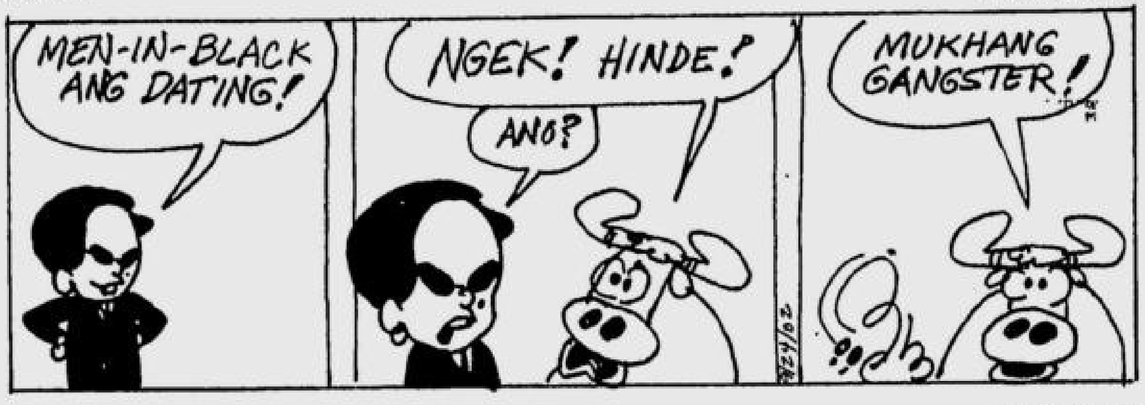
9/24/02

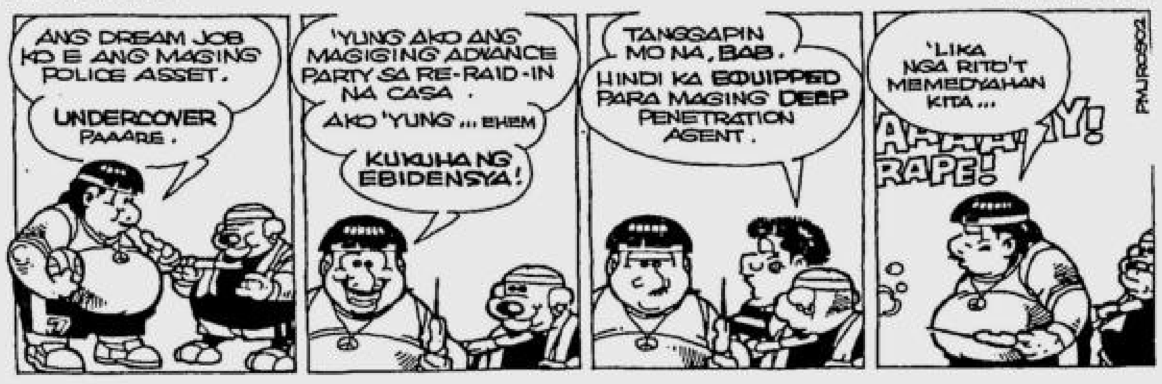
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MEN-IN-BLACK ANG DATING!
NGEK! HINDE!
ANO?
MUKHANG GANGSTER!
9/24/02

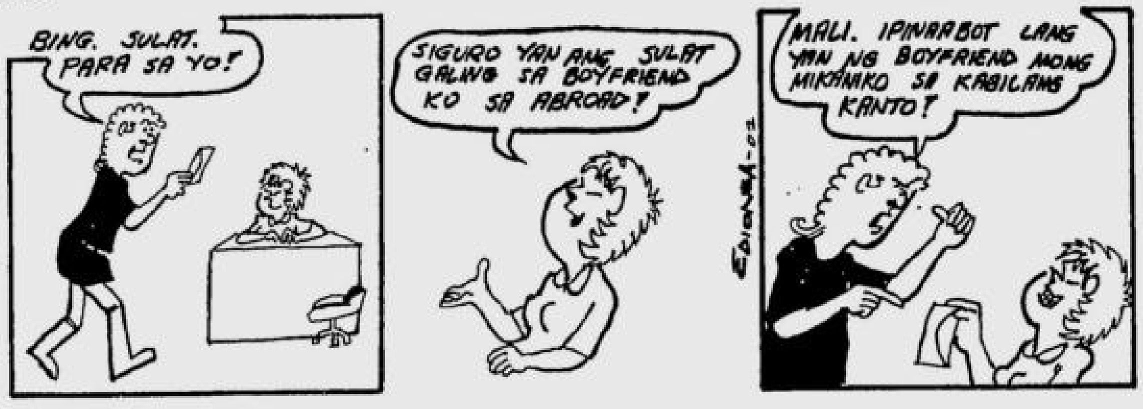
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANG DREAM JOB KO E ANG MAGING POLICE ASSET.
UNDERCOVER PAAARE.
'YUNG AKO ANG MAGIGING ADVANCE PARTY SA RE-RAID-IN NA CASA.
AKO 'YUNG ... EHEM
KUKUHA NG EBIDENSYA!
TANGGAPIN MO NA, BAB.
HINDI KA EQUIPPED PARA MAGING DEEP PENETRATION AGENT.
'LIKA NGA RITO'T MEMEDYAHAN KITA...
AAAAH! ...Y! RAPE!
PMJR0902

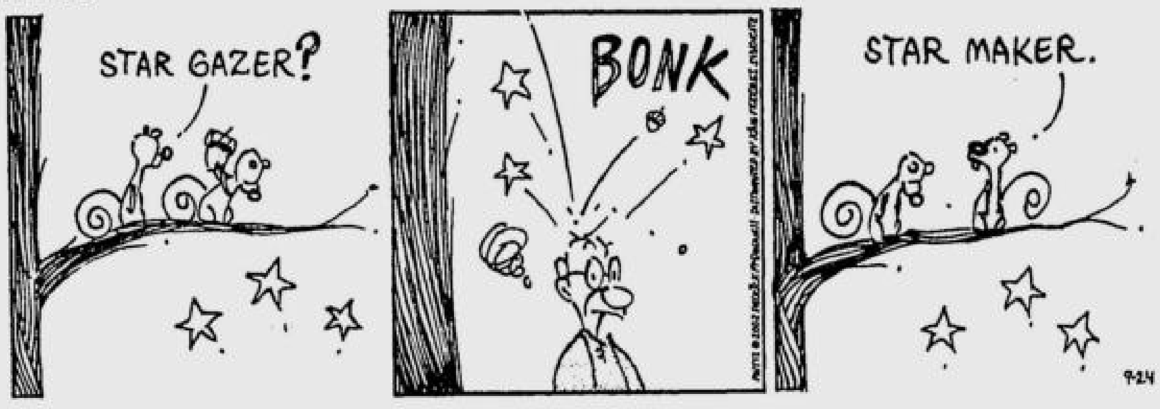
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


BING. SULAT. PARA SA YO!
SIGURO YAN ANG SULAT GALING SA BOYFRIEND KO SA ABROAD!
MALI. IPINAABOT LANG YAN NG BOYFRIEND MONG MIKAMKO SA KABILANG KANTO!

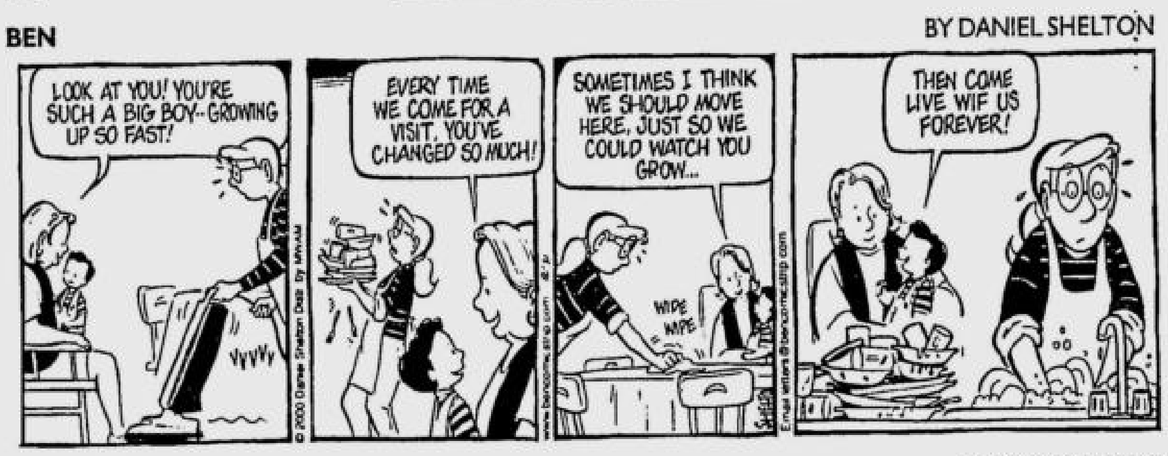
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


STAR GAZER?
BONK
STAR MAKER.
9-24

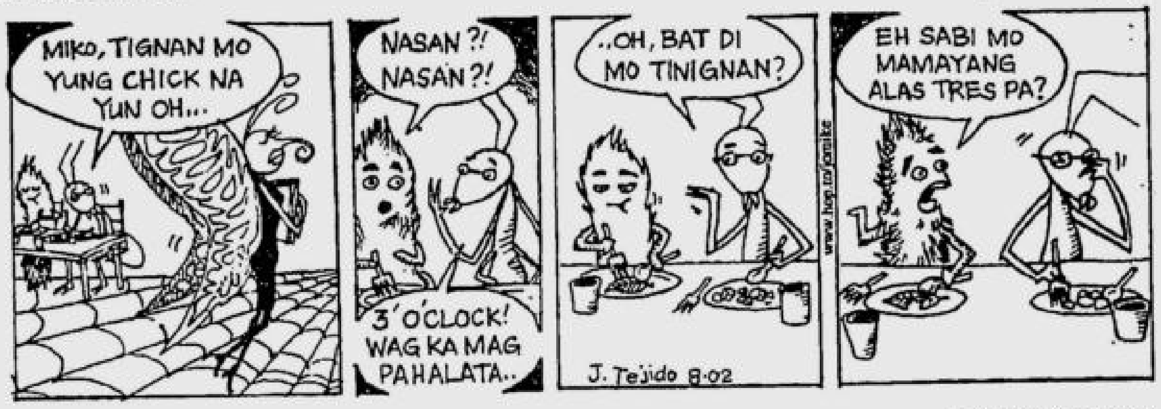
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


LOOK AT YOU! YOU'RE SUCH A BIG BOY-- GROWING UP SO FAST!
EVERY TIME WE COME FOR A VISIT, YOU'VE CHANGED SO MUCH!
SOMETIMES I THINK WE SHOULD MOVE HERE, JUST SO WE COULD WATCH YOU GROW...
WIPE WIPE
THEN COME LIVE WIF US FOREVER!

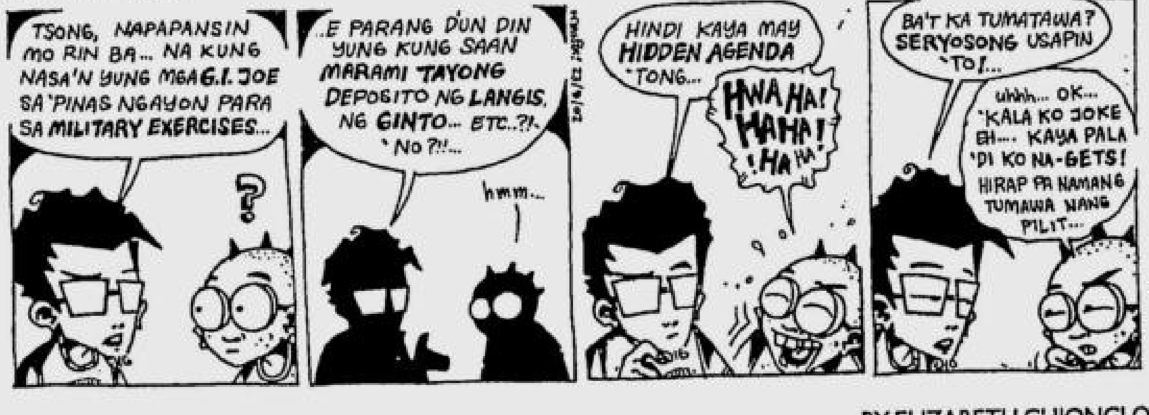
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MIKO, TIGNAN MO YUNG CHICK NA YUN OH...
NASAN?! NASAN?!
3 O'CLOCK! WAG KA MAG PAHALATA..
..OH, BAT DI MO TINIGNAN?
EH SABI MO MAMAYANG ALAS TRES PA?
J. Tejido 8-02

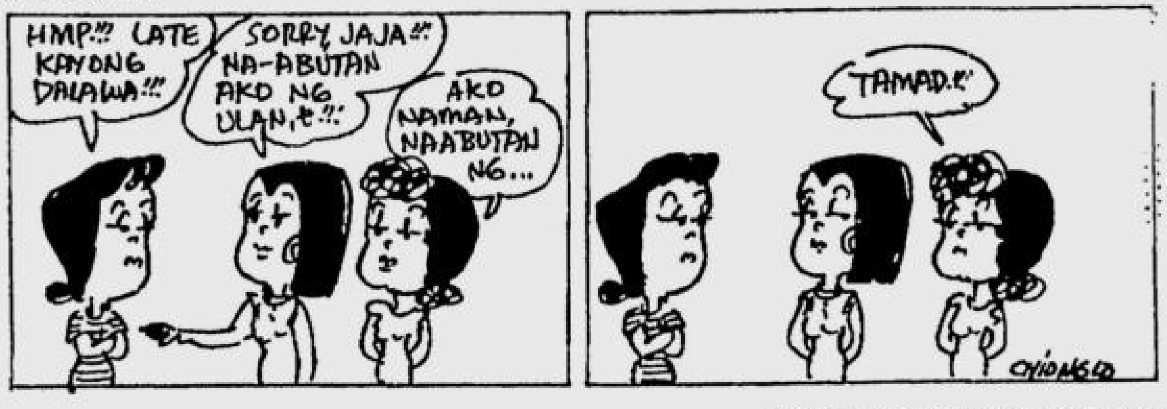
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG, NAPAPANSIN MO RIN BA... NA KUNG NASA'N YUNG MGA G.I. JOE SA 'PINAS NGAYON PARA SA MILITARY EXERCISES...
?
..E PARANG D'UN DIN YUNG KUNG SAAN MARAMI TAYONG DEPOSITO NG LANGIS, NG GINTO... ETC..?! 'NO?!...
hmm...
HINDI KAYA MAY HIDDEN AGENDA 'TONG...
HWA HA! HAHA! HA HA
BA'T KA TUMATAWA? SERYOSONG USAPIN 'TO!...
uhhh... OK... 'KALA KO JOKE EH.... KAYA PALA 'DI KO NA-GETS! HIRAP PA NAMANG TUMAWA NANG PILIT...

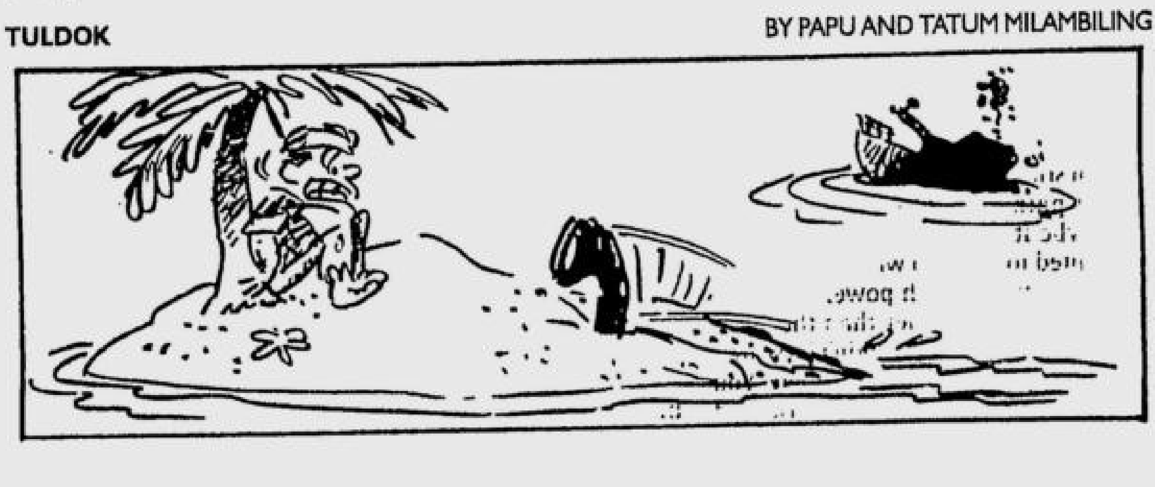
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HMP!!! LATE KAYONG DALAWA!!!
SORRY, JAJA!! NA-ABUTAN AKO NG ULAN, E!?!
AKO NAMAN, NAABUTAN NG...
"TAMAD."
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



Unclutter your life to eliminate stress

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

It is a known fact that stress is a major cause of illness. In fact, it is a major cause of a lot of other problems.

When the spirit is not at ease, it can and will fall prey to anxiety and depression. This being the case, there is a growing perception among psychiatrists that whenever possible, the conditions that contribute to stress must be avoided.

Modern times create modern problems. One emerging malady that has plagued many is called the Clutter Stress Syndrome. People with this condition hide problems they do not wish to confront. They "bury" their fears in overcrowded closets, disorganized cabinets, mountains of paper and un-catalogued boxes of miscellaneous memorabilia. Sounds familiar?

If so, then maybe your clutter is trying to tell you something.

Message in our mess

Shea Dean, in a Reader's Digest feature last August titled "Clutter and Chaos," explained that underneath the pile of junk there was a psychological connection to one's state of mind and heart.

- You are avoiding something. In denial about major issues in your life, you refuse to face reality if: confronted by bills—you refuse to accept that you have money woes; old family pictures—past joys will only remind you of your present pain/frustration; old office files—holding on to the past while denying your present to unfold; old clothes from decades past—a reminder of better days and better figures or worst days and horrible waistlines—whatever the reason, the collection overload may be sending you conflicting signals.
- You fear failure. The junk pile in your room may be a delaying tactic of sorts when you say, "If I were better organized, I can get started on my next project." In other words, it is easier to put off a dream than to move and make it happen.
- You've changed—and aren't prepared for it. Holding on to clutter and allowing it to grow will only allow "snakes" of denial to thrive within. You know you have to clean up but are lazy for a reason: you are afraid of change.
- You want to retreat. Even in your own home you want to isolate yourself from friends and family by refusing to throw a party because "your things are not organized." According to Sandra Felton, founder of Messies Anonymous, an online chat group of Mates of Messies, "disorganization leads to divorce." And since "home is often where women have power, this is the way to express their hostility."
- You're holding on to someone. Whether that is the memory of a dearly departed or a grown-up child, you hold on to memorabilia that can only prevent you from accepting your present reality. If you allow yourself to be overwhelmed by your sorrow or nostalgia, you will not be able to let go.

The cure

- Face your monsters. By walking into a room you dread entering, you have already made a big step in facing your fears. Assess the mess. Then come to terms with your fear—that change is inevitable. Chant your battle-cry: "I can do this!"
- Devote regular time weekly to sorting out your junk. You don't have to do this overnight. Get several garbage bags and start discarding unnecessary items.
- Take a breather between clean-up episodes. A stiff neck or a migraine means a break time.
- Hold a garage sale.
- Donate to charity your old books, toys and clothes.

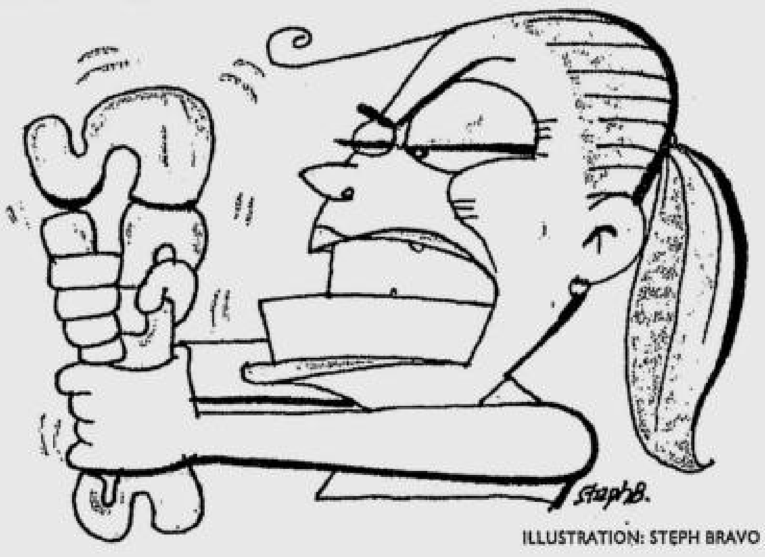


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Making miracles

An instant feeling of lightness is what most once-cluttered people experience. After clearing their own cobwebs, they experience a liberation of sorts. For as long as they have the clutter, they remain unfocused and lazy, unsure of their own life's direction. The act of throwing out the unwanted seems like clearing up lives stifled by unproductive emotions like anger, bitterness, sorrow, hatred and frustration. These people no longer feel weighed down.

Clearly, this is an effective way to detoxify the spirit through good housekeeping. Once the negatives have been removed—barriers to allowing the positive to enter your life—the possibilities become unlimited. If anything is possible, then so is a miracle. Clearing space in your closet symbolically means you are making space for dreams to happen.

Uncluttering

Certainly you can be a messy eater and a bad nutritionist for your own self.

You abuse your body all the time. So why not remove the clutter of preservatives, flavor enhancers, food coloring, fat, salt and sugar from your system?

Going raw

Take a 24-hour break from eating cooked food. Eat nothing but fresh fruits and veggies. Nourish yourself with 8-10 glasses of clean, pure water. The promise of energy and lightness will come the very next day.

So unclutter you closet today and, along with it, your heart and mind.

You will unclutter your life in the process!

Love and light!

"Total Wellness—The Body, Mind and Spirit" workshop with Jimmy Licauco and Cory Quirino, will be held on Oct. 26 at Discovery Suites, Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Call 892-6806/ 637-9653.

"Forever Young" (new edition) is available at National Book Store and PowerBooks.

Erratum: "Dieter's Guide to Fine Dining" (PDI Lifestyle 09/10/02): Henry's Restaurant: tel. 534-0475

E-mail author at coryquirino_fy @yahoo.com.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Hamstring wall stretch

STRETCHES the hamstrings or the back of the thighs

Equipment

Exercise mat and a wall

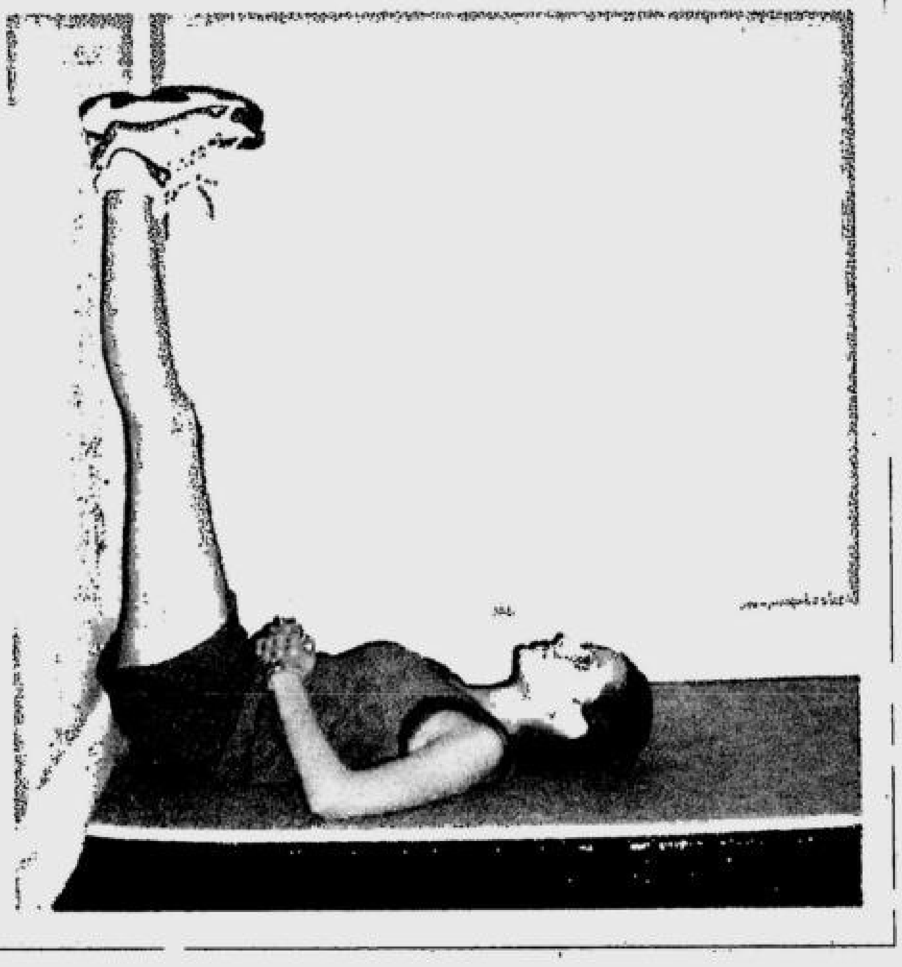
Exercise technique

Lie down on the mat with your knees bent toward your chest. Move closer to the wall until your buttocks are touching it. Slowly straighten your legs. Hold the stretch for 30-60 seconds. If your hamstrings are very tight, extend up to a few minutes.

Performance tips

Stretch to the point of mild tension but never to the point of pain.

If it feels very uncomfortable to do the exercise with your buttocks touching the wall, try moving a few inches away until you find a more comfortable angle.



Yoga becoming a competitive sport

From page C1

yoga for the mind-body-spirit connection; today the motivation is a vigorous workout and a great body."

For her article in Yoga Journal, "Ouch! If yoga is such a gentle practice, why are so many people getting hurt?", writer and yoga instructor Carrie Schneider interviewed teachers and practitioners to get to the bottom of the worrisome increase in injuries.

One person she interviewed, Robin Aronson, developed a debilitating hip injury that had to be fixed through surgery.

Describing her gym's Ashtanga class, Aronson said, "It was a competitive environment, and I became fairly aggressive in it. I wanted to be really good. So (even) if something hurt a lot it didn't stop me from trying to do it. I was excited and just wanted to go for it—that's the culture of the gym I was in."

Even the slower forms of yoga can be problematic if the student does not listen to his or her body. Mary Jagiello, a 60-year-old woman, recounted to The Times how she hurt her knee during her first yoga class. She said her knee started to shake while she was doing a lunge but she ignored it. She then felt a searing pain and her knee gave out. The teacher, she said, didn't warn her not to try what everyone else was doing.

She also blamed herself, saying, "I'm still kicking myself. The second I felt pain, I should have stopped. Maybe it was a macho thing, but I wanted to keep up with the class."

But even though power yoga and Ashtanga are riskier than the more gentle forms, you shouldn't be scared of them if you like the challenge. You just have to look for an experienced teacher who offers modifications and, more importantly, you should know your own body's strengths and weaknesses and work with them. Build up to the more challenging poses, progressing by levels. Injuries occur because people do not listen to the signals their body is sending them. Educate yourself by buying books or videos designed for beginners so you can learn more about the basic poses.

Adapt to your needs

You also need to develop a healthy attitude towards your yoga practice. You are a special, unique person who deserves a special, unique yoga workout. Make your yoga fit your needs and not the other way around. Do not be ashamed to modify any of the poses to make them safer for your body. So what if you have to bend your knees to touch the floor with your hands while doing a forward bend? What good will it do to straighten your legs at the expense of your hamstring muscles and lower back? Eventually, as your body gets more flexible you will be able to perform a forward bend in "perfect" form. Then again, you may never be able to do it with straight legs. There might be an anatomical reason why you cannot.

Donna Farhi, a yoga teacher in New Zealand, told Yoga Journal she always sensed that extremely deep and repetitious back-bending was not healthy for her body. Fortunately, she didn't insist because she eventually found out the reason for her stubborn spine—a congenital weakness in the lower back area where vertebrae had not fused.

It feels miserable to be injured and be unable to do the exercises you love. I know because I suffered a weight-lifting injury in my shoulder many years ago that, although healed, still bothers me from time to time. I don't want to make the same mistake with yoga. So I always tell my clients (I say this in all kinds of exercise classes) to leave their egos inside their lockers, together with their gym bags. Lock them in there and don't let them out till after the class. They should enter the room only with a humble and reverent respect for their body's uniqueness.

In last week's column, I mentioned that a friend and I joined a yoga class of about one hundred people in Santa Monica, California. It was my friend's first time to do yoga but she, the competitive soul that she was, was attempting to do positions that I, with some yoga experience under my belt, was not foolish enough to try. So, of course, I was giving her the "evil eye" and scolding her under my breath to stop before she got hurt. My friend is the sweetest of people but something changes in her when she starts exercising. After reading last week's article, she said she had learned her lesson and would stop pushing herself so hard because she would now "treasure and respect her body." Well said.

Next week, the third and last of this series: How to prevent specific yoga injuries.

The first Philippine Parenting Convention (PPC) will be held Oct. 26-29 at the NBC Tent, Bonifacio Global City, Makati. The convention will tackle various parenting topics and issues through an interactive exposition and simultaneous workshops. For more details, visit www.philippineparenting.org or call Rizza at 433-0387.

Watch "In Fitness & In Health" on Studio 23, 6-6:30 a.m., Mondays to Fridays.

For questions, past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com

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Former colleague says supernatural fails 'science' test

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

IN KEEPING with this newspaper's "Balanced news, fearless views" policy, I am printing below the reply of my former colleague at AIM, Prof. Roberto "Bob" Bernardo, to my two previous columns concerning science and paranormal phenomena.

In an accompanying note to his letter, Bob wrote:

"Previously, I sent you my handwritten reply to your Aug. 27 INQUIRER column about my objections to your enthusiastic endorsement of many supernatural and paranormal claims to truth. It bore the title 'Response to theologian Jaime Licauco.' Date: Sept. 11, 2002. A few days ago, before reading today's (Sept. 17) second installment of your column on the issues, I thought I'd revise it somewhat, (and type) as well, to replace that handwritten earlier version sent to you. I hope this will be more printable as my response. It anticipated some of your readers' responses in today's (Sept. 17) column, so all the more reason I hope you'll print it someday."

So here's Bob's complete response, with no side comments or interruptions from me, so that readers can have an idea how a close-minded rationalist thinks.

Dear JL,

Fair and candid under the circumstances of our recent chance encounter was your Aug. 27 INQUIRER column: about my objections to your writings. Yes, I admit to changing tones from the usual "Hi, how have you been?" to intellectually attacking, as you wrote, your "writings about angels, psychic experiences, astral projection and near-death experiences." You mentioned "nature spirits or ghosts," too, and, of course, you've written as well on reincarnation, soul mates, faith healers and the like to merit being called a New Age theologian. Or cultist, from the critical scientific point of view. It's not personal, as I hope you'll see.

You wrote in your very popular column: "I told him (me) I have always been scientific in my writings, but not in the narrow (physicalistic terms) he had defined science to be." May I ask you to give me space to dispute this all-important and profound topic? By way of invoking the prestige and authority of today's greatest mainstream scientists as presented, say, by the select American National Academy of Science? Now and then report of their worldviews are (sic) published, and I have read a few of their books. Very familiar I am with the great evolutionary E.O. Wilson's 1998 magisterial synthesis of it all, his must-read "Consilience. He is a Deist" (like our greatest Philippine scientist-hero, Rizal) but like the latter is honest enough to be very clear and to leave its conclusive confirmation, or falsification as the case might be, to more advances in science and its incredibly powerful instruments. He, with other top scientists, is open to phenomena that could fall under what you call "other forms of reality and other modes of knowing."

Advances in quantum physics of Big Bang, black holes, in the synthesis of life and intelligence, etc., may reveal a metaphysical reality the great scientist Stephen Wolfram is said to reveal. We shall see! Broad and open in their scientific epistemology top scientists might be, contrary to what your column stated and implied, they nevertheless would insist on scientific demonstration and testing, its essence being strictly honest conformity to facts-based mental analysis, and synthesis for testing. Thus strange new forms of invisible reality otherwise incomprehensible to unaided commonsense have been revealed to exist. And their reliability assessed.

Alas, JL, as the Houdini-like investigator James Randi and others have shown, no supernaturalist and paranormal has complied yet in the most honest clear way to the rigorous, repeatable and public tests required by the experts. Top scientists of E.O. Wilson's caliber never tire of reminding us that the scientific process of knowing has in the last decades progressed enough to cover the most reliable researches into the nature of consciousness and soul, God, cosmic origins, ethics culture, existence itself. Our knowledge of how the brain works to fool itself and others most of the time has rapidly advanced, and is now required knowledge for serious claimants of say, a Cartesian soul-mind and the like. You might also say science is the tool to keep one from being so often misled and fooled by the brain's workings, as in dreams and perceptions.

For you, JL, to keep insisting that your writings on supernatural and paranormal (occult) phenomena come forth from scientific research in the broad sense is not very honest. It misleads. It leads already non-critical and non-heading Filipinos astray, as do the mutually fighting and contradicting faiths. Incidentally, these are your fiercest critics: at least I don't say your writings and teachings are inspired by the devil. I hope you reflect on these, for your redemption's sake, as our greatest scientist-hero would say, to my knowledge. His 1880s analysis of culture-and-cults damaged minds turned to mush with anti-scientific gobbledygook (such as you encourage) remains as timely today in the world, as both Wilson and David Landes' 1998 classics have shown.

(Sgd.) RM (BOB) BERNARDO

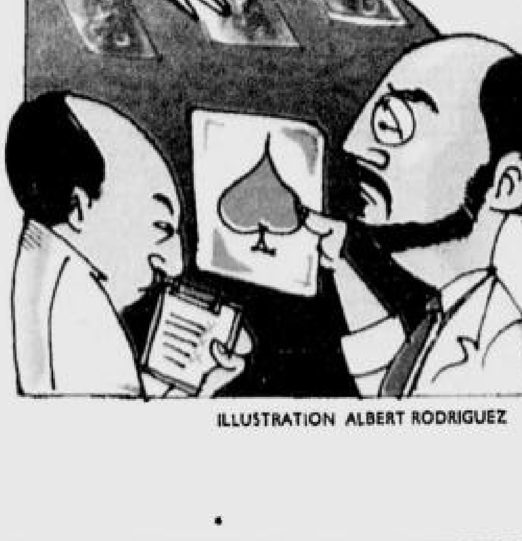
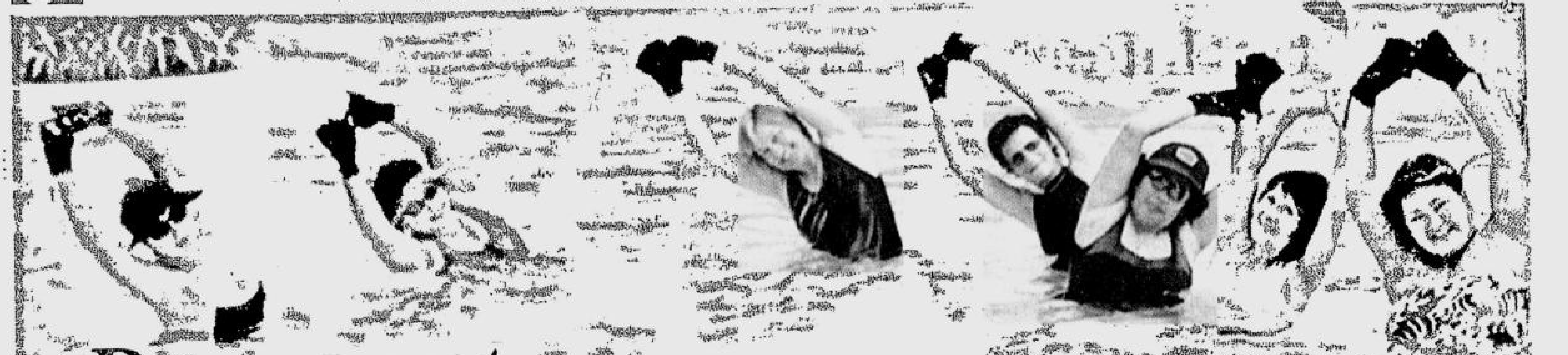


ILLUSTRATION ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph. Visit http://jlicauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.



Pregnant women can keep fit in the pool

Text by Anne A. Jambora
Photos by Mandy Navasero

YOU'RE pregnant. The extra weight you carry around—your baby's and your own, the sweet indulgences you stuff yourself with—bears down so uncomfortably on you. You feel sluggish and over-fatigued, deal with perennial back pains and whine over hideous snake-like varicose veins down your legs. And they're telling you to exercise?

Well, studies have shown that prenatal exercise reduces pregnancy symptoms such as backaches, muscle and joint soreness, leg cramps and varicose veins. It promotes better circulation, reduces swelling; better digestion, less constipation; lifts the spirit, improves the mood and increases the energy level. Exercising also promotes flexibility, which will be handy during labor. It also helps women get back their pre-pregnancy bodies after childbirth.

Not all pregnant women, of course, can exercise. Lifestyle, fitness level and overall health might make it unwise for some women on the family way to exercise. Expectant mothers must consult their doctors before starting, continuing and changing an exercise regimen. Safety should always be at the top of the list when working out.

So how do pregnant women, especially since they don't all have the robust spirit of someone like pop star/mother Madonna, stay safe while keeping fit?

Soothing water

MAMEN Peña, aqua fitness instructor

> The safest place for them for a workout is where they can have the soothing comforts of water

The safest place for pregnant women to work out in is where they can have the soothing comforts of water. That's right. They should hit the pool to heighten muscle tone without strain, to feel lighter despite the extra load, to have better mobility. If they have the guidance of Carmen "Mamen" Peña, aqua fitness instructor at the San Juanico Sports Complex, Ayala-Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City, it matters little if they can't swim or not.

Classes are held in only chest-deep water, no deeper.

Peña, who also has students who are not pregnant, modifies some routines for expectant women. "The need is always different for everybody—whether pregnant or not. Be your own judge. If you feel tired, slow down. If you feel it's not for you, stop doing it," she says.

TORSO rotation with the noodle

"Pregnant women move better in water than on land. [Tough] yet utterly simple routines such as bending can easily be performed in the water," Peña says. Besides, she adds, aqua fitness is 20 times more effective than ordinary workouts since water adds resistance and intensifies the effect of exercise.

The water's buoyancy keeps injuries of participants minimal, if any. Peña says aqua exercises are the safest way to stay in tip-top condition physically, as they put less stress on the joints because the movements are controlled and fluid, not jarring and abrupt compared to lifting weights or running on the treadmill.

Water has been hailed for ages for its therapeutic properties. The late United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt popularized water therapy and pool exercises when he was being treated for his polio condition in 1924. Today, aqua exercises are as popular as any fitness regimen in the US.

When Peña, a self-confessed exercise addict who once passed out in the gym after pushing herself too hard, got pregnant five years ago, longtime gym buddy and INQUIRER columnist Tina Juan advised her to take things slowly. "The effects [of exercise] were no longer the same. Instead of feeling a sense of elation that I usually get after a regular gym workout, I felt beat and tired instead," she says.

Relaxing experience

Then she discovered aqua exercises. Perla Thomas, a Mexican expatriate who was then teaching at Ayala-Alabang, told her aqua aerobics would be good and safe for her. Peña said the minute she stepped into the water her weariness disappeared.

"The feel of the water against my body was the most relaxing experience I'd ever had while I was pregnant," she says. What's best, she says, is being able to perform tasks that used to exhaust her with very little effort. Peña soon joined Juan in attending conventions abroad to learn more about aqua exercises.

When Thomas left the country, Peña decided to head the program herself.

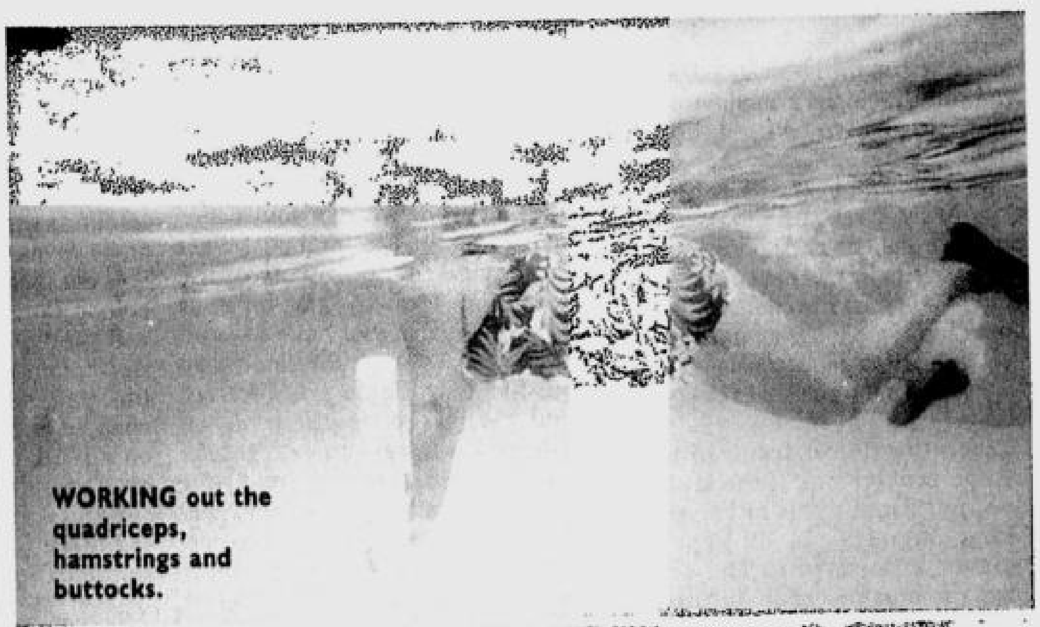
"My aqua classes are a combination of kickboxing, some yoga movements, and I use equipment such as noodles, balls and dumbbells. It's a combination of cardiovascular endurance and strength training."

But as much as the regimen is safe, Peña says pregnant women should not begin exercising during the last trimester. She insists that women seek medical clearance from their doctors first.

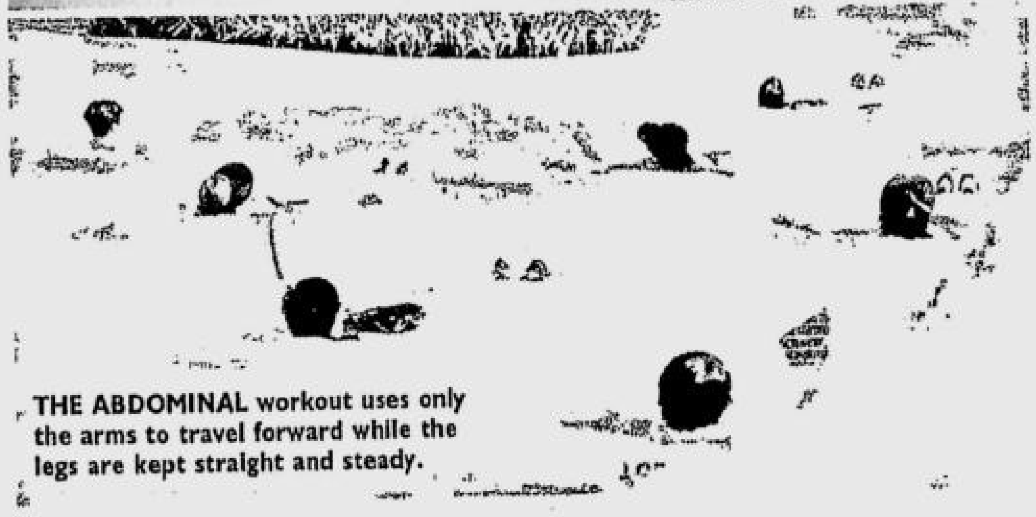
Peña also holds one-on-one sessions and special classes. You may reach her at (0917) 535-7353

E-mail the author at ajambora@inquirer.com.ph

BUDDY SYSTEM. Riding the same noodle back to back, doing the bicycle maneuver on opposite directions.



WORKING out the quadriceps, hamstrings and buttocks.



THE ABDOMINAL workout uses only the arms to travel forward while the legs are kept straight and steady.

Take Charge Doc!
Nicky S. Montoya, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

We have been a MEDICard FAMILY program holder since 1999. When my husband moved to his new company, we were also enrolled under their MEDICard CORPORATE health program. Can we avail of the benefits of both cards? Will the coverage on one card affect the other?

Yes, you may avail of the benefits of both cards. However, you may only avail of the benefits accruing from one agreement. You must choose which agreement will apply to the availment or confinement. The coverage will be governed by the terms and conditions and limits of the said agreement. This does not in anyway influence your benefits under the second healthcare program, which you may apply if you have exhausted the limits on the first card, or for other availments or confinements.

Meet your MEDICard Team

Dr. Felicitas C. Manalastas-Lector, who is based in Medical City General Hospital (MCGH) has more than 13 years of clinical practice in the field of Medicine. She is an OB-Gynecologist who subspecializes in OB-Gyne Ultrasonography. Dr. Lector is a graduate of Medicine from the University of Santo Tomas. She took her residency training for her specialization at MCGH and her residency for her subspecialty at the Manila Central University-Filemon D. Tanchoco Medical Foundation Hospital. With persistent hard work, she earned her Fellowship affiliations to the Philippine Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, the Philippine College of Surgeons and the Philippine Society of Ultrasound in OB-Gynecology. She spends most of her free time with her husband, businessman Arnel Lector and their two daughters, Ina Beatriz and Isabel Bernadette. For your medical OB-Gyne consultations, visit Dr. Felicitas at Room 501 of Medico Bldg. every Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, from 12 noon to 2 in the afternoon.

Contract Signing

BAYAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS, INC. (BayanTel), the fixed line telecommunications service provider and the leading provider of data and communications services, signed its healthcare program agreement with MEDICard last September 09 at the Dulcinea Restaurant in Tomas Morato. Signing the agreement were (seated L to R) Felipe T. Ruiz (BayanTel VP-HR), Gary V. Olivar (BayanTel CFO), Dr. Nicanor Montoya (MEDICard President) and Dr. Nicky Montoya (MEDICard Medical Director); (standing L-R) Roel Yumul (MEDICard Med. Operations Manager), Manuel Sison (BayanTel SM-HR), Louda Martinez (BayanTel AVP-HR), Rose Alipio (MEDICard Claims & Reimbursement Manager), Michelle Gayle Millan (BayanTel HR Nurse), Glennford Mirasol (MEDICard RMD Sr. Manager), Marcos Manghenoi (BayanTel SM-HR), Jessica Baticulon (BayanTel HR Manager), Lulu Dadia (MEDICard Corp. Accounts Manager) & Monica Villaseñor (MEDICard Account Executive)

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. BE HEARD AND BE READ. You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTOYA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at [illegible]. For feedback on availment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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